CIVIL SOCIETY ASSESSMENT

CIVIL SOCIETY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ATL	Anti-terrorism law
CBO(s)	Community Based Organization(s)
CDFJ	Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists
CIS	Civic Initiatives Support [Program]
CoM	Council of Ministers
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
CSP	Civil Society Project
CSS	Civil Society Sector
CVE	Counter(ing) Violent Extremism or Counter Violent Extremist
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GFJW	General Federation of Jordanian Women
GoJ	Government of Jordan
GSF	Gender Social Fund
GUVS	General Union of Voluntary Societies
HCCSD	Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
IO(s)	Intermediary Organizations
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham
JACEE	Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange
JCLA	Justice Center for Legal Aid
JD(s)	Jordanian Dinar(s)
JIA	Jordan Investors Association
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
JNFW	Jordanian National Forum for Women
JOHUD	Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development
JWU	Jordanian Women's Union
KII(s)	Key Informant Interview(s)
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MoMA	Ministry of Municipal Affairs
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MP(s)	Member(s) of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDO(s)	National Development Organization(s) [See also RONGO(s)]
NfPC(s)	Not-for-Profit Company(ies)

NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
OFAN	Opportunities for All Networks
PCEIS	Phoenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies
RONGO(s)	Royal Non-Governmental Organization(s)
UO(s)	Umbrella Organization(s)
USG	United States Government
VE	Violent Extremism or Violent Extremist
VP	Venture Philanthropy
VPO(s)	Venture Philanthropy Organization(s)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Assessment has three main objectives: to provide an up-to-date and empirically-grounded analysis of the civil society sector (CSS) in Jordan and the challenges it faces; to inform the mid-term evaluation of USAID's Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program and its workplan; and to inform broader USAID civil society assistance programming. The assessment used a primarily qualitative approach. Following extensive consultations with CIS staff and a comprehensive literature review, fieldwork began on May 24, 2015 and continued through June 18, 2015. Assessment findings are based on 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews with 73 key informants conducted in Mafraq, Irbid, Amman, Zarqa, Ma`an, and Tafileh. Informants include a cross-section of Government of Jordan (GoJ) officials at the national, governorate, and local levels; members of parliament (MPs) and former MPs; mayors and municipal council members; leaders and staff of civil society organizations (CSOs); civil society experts (journalists, academics, lawyers, public figures); representatives of the donor community; and staff from USAID implementing partners.

The space Jordanian CSOs enjoy is influenced heavily by the restrictive Law on Societies of 2008 as amended in 2009, as well as by key provisions in other texts relevant to civil society operations, including the Penal Code, which contains several provisions that curb free expression (particular Articles 149 and 191); the 2004 Law on Public Gatherings (especially Article 4); the 2007 Press and Publications Law, as amended in 2012 (especially Article 5 and 38b); and the 2006 Anti-Terrorism Law as amended in June 2014. This legislation does not create an enabling environment for civil society and in the past few years, several of the above laws have been revised in a more restrictive direction. Consequently, the constraints that they create for civil society activity have become even more significant.

Six contextual variables shape civil society activity in Jordan. The first is the regional crisis, which has placed a premium on security and stability; reduced both the demand for political reform and the readiness of the authorities to supply it; created legitimate security concerns that provide excuses for the authorities to clamp down on independent activity; and reinforced the predisposition of many officials to be suspicious of any forms of autonomous civic activities and to see them as a direct or implicit challenge to the state. The second factor is the Syrian refugee crisis, which has distorted civil society activity by prompting many CSOs to follow donors' lead and reorient their activities to tackle this new challenge, often in ways that do not align with their mission, strengths, and weaknesses. The third contextual factor is the pervasive distrust of civil society that prevails in many government circles. The perception of civil society as disloyal and bent on promoting foreign agendas appears to be particularly pronounced among second- and third-tier officials, who also happen to be those who can complicate the lives of civil society activists on a daily basis. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in sensitive or vulnerable geographic areas may experience interference by the security services (for instance during CSO board elections). Various forms of intimidation and harassment (e.g., detailed audits of CSOs' accounts and records, or public defamation campaigns that entail the dissemination of allegations and rumors against leaders of particular CSOs) are also used. The fourth factor is the critical role of discretionary power, personal relationships, and political access. As the laws that shape civil society activity contain vague provisions open to contradictory interpretations, officials enjoy a great deal of discretion in applying them. A related factor is the importance for CSOs to build personal relationships with decision-makers. Cultivating and maintaining access to power is critical to a CSO's ability to get things done by opening doors, bypassing regulations, and avoiding restrictions. Enjoying the goodwill of influential figures is a vital form of insurance if, and when, a CSO comes under attack. The fifth factor is the extent to which a CSO's thematic focus and capacities enable it to support or complement government action. As a rule, the more that is the case, the greater the space the authorities will allow for that organization. Finally, location matters a great deal. Amman-based CSOs

enjoy much greater freedom to conduct "sensitive" activities and hold public meetings than those in the governorates.

The sector has experienced both striking continuities and a few important changes in the past decade. Nine main continuities can be detected. First, the vast majority of CSOs in Jordan remain charity- and service-delivery focused, although some of them – mostly Royal NGOs (RONGOs) and a few national NGOs – tackle broader development issues. Community-based Organizations (CBOs) represent approximately 80 percent of all CSOs; they are concerned exclusively with community development and the provision of basic humanitarian and relief assistance. Second, the advocacy component of civil society – defined as CSOs for which advocacy is the primary mission – remains extremely small and under-developed. Among the small number of advocacy CSOs, a small minority concentrate on democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) issues. They are based exclusively in Amman and are think tanks or policy institutes as much as advocacy groups. Third, civil society remains donor-driven and donor-dependent. Most CSOs are established first and foremost to access donor funding. As a result, they lack a clear mission and an organic connection to the communities or constituencies they claim to serve. Instead, they react to the priorities of donors and thus tend to be project- or activity-driven. Fourth, the level of professionalism and the quality of governance across the sector remains low overall, despite islands of (sometimes significant) improvements. For instance, still too few CSOs understand, let alone act on, the need to be mission-driven; except for RONGOs, most CSOs lack clear mission statements; only a few of them engage in strategic planning; CSO boards are typically ineffective and lack genuine power; and most CSOs have weak management systems. Fifth, there remains a huge gap between *civil society* and *society*: instead of developing organically out of society to reflect its needs and aspirations, civil society exists side by side with it. Sixth, the vast majority of Jordanian CSOs are still insufficiently specialized and spread themselves too thin. As a result, they do not allocate their limited resources effectively. Seventh, the sector remains extremely fragmented and the level of cooperation, sharing of ideas and coordination among CSOs remains low. CSOs have been unable to form durable alliances and coalitions to articulate a coherent and compelling vision of the changes to which they aspire, and how they propose to bring about those changes. While they bemoan this state of affairs, they demonstrate little inclination or capacity to change it. Eighth, most Jordanians do not understand what civil society is, nor do they appreciate its contributions, limited as those contributions may be. Media outlets continue to play a generally unhelpful role in this regard: their coverage of civil society remains superficial, frequently negative, and heavily tilted toward RONGOs, which receive more extensive and positive attention. Finally, ninth, the extent and quality of the sector's engagement with government entities remain very limited.

These important continuities notwithstanding, some significant changes have affected civil society. First, the sector has experienced exponential growth since the late 2000s. In the past seven years, the number of officially registered CSOs has tripled from approximately 1,500 in 2008 to over 4,600 today. This phenomenon, however, does not reflect a surge in civic consciousness and activism, evidenced for one by the negligent role that civil society played in stirring such consciousness during the short lived Arab Spring in Jordan.[1] Instead, it is driven primarily by individuals seeking to access the funding that donors allocate for civil society assistance. Second, since the late 2000s, the government has steadily tightened its control over the sector, a process that appears to be accelerating. Third, the GoJ's rhetoric about civil society has become increasingly bifurcated and contradictory. Official statements – particularly from the Palace – praise civil society and underscore the critical contributions it makes to address the problems confronting the kingdom. This same discourse urges partnerships between state agencies, the private sector, and CSOs and portrays civil society as a key source of information and feedback for a government bent on consultation and dialogue. In contradiction, key GoJ figures have repeatedly been

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[1] Yom, Sean, *Arab Civil Society after the Arab Spring: Weaker but Deeper*, Middle East Institute, October 22, 2015.

critical of civil society, emphasizing its flaws and dismissing its role in national development. These attacks then are relayed and amplified by sympathetic media outlets, especially those under government control, which helps negative views of civil society gain widespread acceptance in public opinion. Fourth, a handful of NGOs active in the DRG area are more visible. They have earned a degree of public recognition and respect through the quality of their monitoring, lobbying, advocacy and policy-analysis work. Fifth, there is a growing recognition by some CSOs of the importance of strategic planning, being mission-driven, consulting with stakeholders, and engaging in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects and activities. Nonetheless, organizations that embrace these practices remain the exception, not the rule.

FGDs and key informant interviews yielded important insights about stakeholders' views of civil society's contributions to six national objectives: social-sector development; economic growth; improved service delivery; political reform; countering violent extremism (CVE); and coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis. Overall, respondents overwhelmingly assessed civil society's contributions as ranging from limited (as for service delivery) to insignificant (countering VE). Respondents consistently felt that out of the six objectives, civil society contributes most to service provision, which remains the primary and often exclusive focus of the vast majority of CSOs in Jordan. Even then, interviewees also generally agreed that the sector's performance in this area suffers from several flaws: the quality of the services offered often is low and the range of beneficiaries limited; services do not necessarily match the primary needs of recipients, in part because CSOs rarely conduct needs assessments; and civil society actors have failed to prioritize improving accessibility to the services they provide, the quality of these services, and how to reach out to the most vulnerable populations. With regard to both social sector development and economic growth, civil society's contributions were generally viewed as marginal. Civil society has had limited successes in mitigating some of the worst manifestations of social marginality and economic stagnation, but its efforts in this area remain largely on the margin and do not address root causes. The growing social needs of the population, which have been compounded by the influx of Syrian refugees, have exceeded civil society's limited capacities.

The vast majority of informants were of the opinion that civil society plays a largely insignificant role in facilitating political reform, particularly if performance in this area is measured in terms of policy change, new legislation, or shifts in political norms or behavior. Views regarding some of the better-known national-level DRG organizations were mixed. While civil society experts noted that these organizations have become more professional and competent and that they perform useful watchdog functions, including documenting human rights violations and engaging in election and parliamentary monitoring, they also recognize that while the monitoring, lobbying, and policy analysis are valuable, they lack broader impact on the polity and society. In fact, there is a general sentiment that the issues NGOs work on have low grassroots mobilization potential and that their inability to rally a large swath of the Jordanian public remains a structural impediment to their effectiveness, due to both supply and demand factors.

Respondents overwhelmingly suggested that CSOs have played a negligible role in the fight against VE, whether in terms of addressing root causes, rebutting extremist thinking, developing compelling counter-narratives, or promoting tolerance in society. This poor record reflects these CSOs' limitations, although it is also true that the government has not made a concerted effort to harness civil society to tackle the VE challenge. As for the Syrian refugee crisis, its magnitude has overwhelmed the limited capacities of civil society. Civil society has not behaved as an autonomous actor in tackling this crisis. Instead, it has operated largely as a sub-contractor for international organizations, which have set the pace of operations on the ground. Civil society's work with Syrian refugees has been mostly small-scale, ad hoc, and project- or activity-centered. Leaders and staff of CSOs working on refugee issues expressed some resentment at foreign relief agencies; they complained that these agencies have taken advantage of local organizations, relying on them to assume the brunt of the work, but without helping

them build their capacities. Local CSOs want their relationship with foreign implementers to become more equal in terms of joint participation for project vision and design, with an intent to develop capacity of the local partner to implement projects independently.

Despite modest gains over the years, most women's organizations confront a unique set of challenges.[2] Their internal governance remains undemocratic, opaque and personality-driven; rank-and-file members often feel that leadership is not accountable and cannot be changed. The extreme fragmentation of the field and debilitating competition pits women's organizations against each other. There is no unifying vision among women's groups on how to enhance the status and influence of women in Jordan. Most importantly, women's organizations lack broad constituencies; the vast majority of Jordanian women do not recognize themselves in these organizations, the language they use, the causes they promote, the approach they use to promote, and the programming in which they engage. This problem is particularly acute for rights-based organizations, which, as one interviewee noted, "keep pushing programs to try to turn Jordanian women into [western-style] activists." Nonetheless, similar problems exist in many women's organizations focused on service delivery, which offer services that are not necessarily those that women most want.

Interviewees and participants in FGDs consistently expressed criticism of donor engagement, citing lack of a strategic approach to supporting the sector and programming that is overwhelmingly project- or activity- centered as opposed to outcome-driven. Civil society analysts were particularly critical of what they viewed as donors' emphasis on merely "moving money out of the door" – doling out grants and technical assistance with little thought given to impact or a shared understanding of what success in funding the sector might look like. The team heard repeatedly that donors "just want to check the box," "spend their civil society budget," "satisfy their own reporting requirements," and use funding to signal their support for particular issues (including some that backfire in the Jordanian context), but seem indifferent as to whether their civil society programming actually is making a difference on the ground.

Interviewees felt that too much assistance has taken the form of off-the-shelf, repetitious and unimaginative training and other "capacity-building" activities that have emphasized form and process over substance and outcome; have paid insufficient attention to organizational strengthening, as opposed to training individuals; and have been insufficiently geared to the specific profiles, strengths and weaknesses of the particular organizations donors have sought to strengthen. They believed donors have paid insufficient attention to the serious governance issues that continue to plague the sector, despite years of generous donor funding for "capacity building." Civil society activists consistently complained about donors' unwillingness to cover operational costs, long-term investment in staff development, and the capacity to undertake meaningful research. They described this reluctance as a major impediment to actual capacity-building.

One of the most adverse effects of donor programming has been the increasing upward accountability to donors at the expense of downward accountability to would-be constituents. Gaining and retaining access to donor funding and satisfying donors' reporting requirements remains far more important to CSOs than representing the needs and aspirations of issue-based constituencies or particular communities. Lack of coordination among donors was a recurrent complaint of civil society activists who saw it as one of the main reasons for the continued fragmentation, infighting, corruption, and duplication of activities that prevail. Civil society activists and experts also frequently portrayed CSOs as hostages to sudden and significant changes in donors' agendas. They claimed that the abrupt refocusing of donors' efforts toward Syrian refugees has had a major and primarily negative impact on the sector. In

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[2] Examples of Women's organizations in Jordan include the General Federation of Jordanian Women, the Jordanian Women's Union, the Human Forum for Women's Rights, the Arab Women Media Center, the Arab Women's Legal Network and the Jordanian National Forum for Women, Arab Women's Organization, among others.

addition, they expressed frustration with donors' branding requirements and cumbersome and complicated grant-application procedures.

The fieldwork also yielded insights into perceptions of and by civil society. For instance, civil society actors seem strikingly aware of and willing to acknowledge publicly the serious failings of their sector, and furthermore, appear resigned to those flaws and skeptical that they have the power to change a state of affairs that reflects powerful cultural, political, and economic forces. Many civil society activists (especially CBO members) have a superficial understanding of both the concept of civil society and the realities of the sector in Jordan. They share two main views: that civil society's role is to "fill the gaps" left by the government's action, especially in the area of service delivery; and that, as it currently exists in Jordan, civil society is mostly a business driven by, as one respondent put it, "professionals looking for work," people whose drive for change is lacking. For their part, Jordanian citizens have at best a shallow understanding of what civil society is and the functions it is supposed to perform. The vast majority of respondents could not name specific CSOs except for a few RONGOs. Jordanian citizens also believe that civil society's impact is extremely limited, especially with regard to effecting public policy. Even on service delivery, civil society received mixed grades: RONGOs were credited with the vast majority of successes' nonetheless; civil society's performance was viewed as neither adequate nor commensurate with the resources donors have poured in the sector. While citizens do not know much about civil society, FGDs suggested they have a generally negative view of it. By and large, they buy into the narrative of the sector being donor-driven, ripe with corruption and infighting, and driven by opportunistic, self-interested behavior. Interviews confirmed that opinions about RONGOs are generally more positive, particularly with regard to professionalism and impact. Citizens generally feel that the government should closely monitor the activities of civil society and maintain tight control over it, which underscores their pervasive suspicion of and skepticism toward, the sector.

Civil society regards the government as generally unsupportive of its role and unwilling to engage in a true partnership with it. It views government as bent on controlling or coopting the sector rather than helping it grow, and resents government officials' tendency to paint it in a bad light, including to score points with public opinion. Many senior government officials have a skin-deep understanding of what civil society actually represents, the functions it performs, and what it could contribute to Jordan's development. While interviews confirmed that there is no single GoJ perspective on civil society, they also underscored the generally negative view of it that prevails in government circles. Government officials tend to be dismissive of the motivations of civil society activists, how they approach their work, and most importantly, the impact of their activities. They repeatedly complained that civil society activists are more preoccupied with promoting the agendas of donors that don't always reflect local priorities. GoJ officials are willing to acknowledge civil society a limited part in providing social services and in furthering development objectives, but they do not recognize a legitimate role for it in such areas as oversight, policy-making, or advancing political reform. In general, they believed that civil society's role should be limited to helping government provide services and alleviate poverty. They viewed civil society's role through this limited and purely developmental lens. While during interviews they often used the mantra of civil society being "the government's partner," it was clear that the "partnership" relegates civil society to a subservient role. Overall, GoJ officials tend to view civil society as a source of irritation, but one that must be tolerated – not so much because of its limited contributions, but because tolerating it is critical to the state's international image and to maintaining the cooperation and goodwill of donors.

Government informants were consistently and openly critical of the way in which the donor community has conducted its civil society assistance activities. Their primary criticisms were that donors have been lax in monitoring their programs and in demanding accountability from recipient organizations; that they have been insufficiently concerned with impact; and that flooding the sector with funding, combined with lack of coordination among themselves, has contributed heavily to corruption, duplication of activities,

and waste. In addition, they uniformly complained about donors channeling funds to CSOs without adequately coordinating with the GoJ. They argued that this situation has fueled opacity within the sector and is largely responsible for the "chaos" that prevails in it – and which, in their opinion, it is now the responsibility of the GoJ to "clean up."

The overriding and intertwined challenges Jordanian civil society faces are its insufficient impact overall; its limited relevance to the constituencies it claims to serve and to the development and advocacy causes to which it claims to be dedicated; and the absence of broad-based constituencies that believe in it, recognize themselves in it, and are ready to stand up for it. While, the sector today has dug a fairly deep hole for itself; the regional and domestic contexts are not supportive of its growth; and there are currently no great opportunities knocking at civil society's door, there are nonetheless, a few rays of hope. First, civil society is capable of critical self-analysis and is aware of its shortcomings. While on its own it seems incapable of initiating the changes that are needed to overcome those flaws, its very dependency on donors can help the latter nudge it in the right direction. Second, civil society does feature the "islands of performance." Lessons can be drawn from their experience that can suggest ways of improving CSOs' operations as well as donors' approach to the sector. Third, the government has made overtures to civil society, and some mechanisms have been put in place through which the government seeks input from civil society. There is pervasive and warranted skepticism about the government's sincerity in this area, but the sector should endeavor to make the most of what is being offered. Decision-makers may learn to overcome their distrust or contempt for civil society if CSOs can prove their utility by becoming more knowledgeable about community needs and more effective at relaying those needs to officials; by becoming credible sources of data collection and analysis; by offering evidence-based feedback on policies, government plans, or governance challenges; and by piloting programs and services. Trust is earned and negative opinions and preconceptions can be revisited in the face of new evidence. Civil society and the GoJ are not condemned to antagonistic and unproductive ways of relating to one another. If CSOs can position themselves as gatekeepers to particular communities and constituencies, their value to the GoJ will rise, and if and when that takes place their relevance and impact may increase markedly. Finally, the impact of the decentralization law - should it facilitate genuine decentralization - could prove to be very positive for civil society. A result, that while contrary to what is anticipated by most informants, that the law will not bring about real devolution of power but will instead create new layers of bureaucracy and control, still presents a hopeful prospect. CSOs in general and CBOs in particular are uniquely positioned to take advantage of efforts to grant citizens a greater role at the local level. Civil society can position itself as the voice of the community and as a key actor for improving local governance and service delivery. It can learn to harness social-accountability mechanisms to enhance the responsiveness of institutions and officials. If it succeeds in doing so, its credibility, legitimacy, and impact will increase accordingly. Genuine decentralization also would create more reasons for donors to engage with CBOs.

The assessment points to six recommendations for USAID programming:

1. *Emphasize constituency building by CSOs*. CSOs must build broad issue-based constituencies, embed themselves in communities, develop a better understanding of communities' needs, and become more effective at addressing and communicating needs to the authorities. Until that happens, civil society will continue to lack both "micro-relevance" (relevance to the daily lives of Jordanians) and "macro-relevance" (to the challenges facing the kingdom); it will remain donor-driven and donor-dependent; it will not make progress toward sustainability; and its public image will remain poor. Therefore, when designing civil society activities or monitoring their impact, a central question should be: is programming resulting, or is it likely to result, in constituency-building by recipient organizations – and, through them, by the sector as a whole? Constituency-building should take precedence over components of organizational capacity or completion of particular projects and activities.

2. *Encourage the development of strong intermediary organizations (IOs) and to rely on them to channel assistance to civil society*. Donors have devoted too much effort to trying to build the institutional capacity of a large number of small organizations. Scattering resources and energy across the sector has produced only modest results, particularly in terms of constituency building. While the capacities of several individual organizations have been strengthened, the same cannot be said of the sector as a whole. Small and isolated islands of relative performance need to be expanded, especially when the objective was to ensure that gains would be spread across the sector. This approach therefore needs to be reassessed.

As an alternative, USAID might consider supporting the development of a number of carefully selected Intermediary Organizations (IOs) and relying on them to channel assistance to the sector as a whole. In each sub-sector of civil society (service delivery, development, and advocacy), a core group of NGOs with substantial capacity, and a proven track record of achievements could be identified. Those selected entities then could be strengthened in two areas: their ability to build constituencies for themselves, and their capacity to serve as effective vehicles for the delivery of assistance to other CSOs. Assistance to each selected IO would be conditioned on it committing to working with a cluster of clearly identified NGOs and CBOs, for which it would operate as a mentor. That work would entail strengthening the capacities of those NGOs and CBOs; expanding their constituency bases by enabling them to become more effective at identifying and meeting community needs or at advocating for issues that resonate with particular constituencies; channeling their needs and demands up to the national level; and, more generally, coaching and nurturing them. Prior to receiving funding, and as a condition for it, each recipient IO would be required to propose a "high-intensity mentoring work plan" tailored to the specific needs of each of its mentees. Those mentees would constitute the primary constituency of the IO, and they, in turn, would be expected to grow their own local grassroots constituencies. The idea would be for USAID to make a long-term commitment to several carefully selected IOs and sustain their institutional development in comprehensive ways, in the hope that their strengthening will create the critical mass required for qualitative change in the sector.

3. *Develop civil society's capacity to cultivate local donors and access local funding, and explore the venture philanthropy model*. Civil society's dependence on donors for both funding and priority setting hinders its sustainability and credibility, and dis-incentivizes building close relationships with local communities and issue-based constituencies. Meanwhile, both local philanthropists and the private sector have shown little inclination to support civil society (except for RONGOs). This problem must be addressed. One way of doing so might be to facilitate establishing venture philanthropy organizations (VPOs). VPOs go beyond extending grants to recipient organizations by engaging directly and extensively with them at both the strategic and operational levels. They are deeply involved in helping CSOs set strategy, activity portfolios, and workplans. They take a long-term view of institutional strengthening, and they evaluate impact in term of outcomes, not outputs. Instead of funding projects and programs, they help build the capacities of beneficiaries over a long period of time by funding operating costs and providing relevant technical assistance. USAID and other donors should consider the VPO model as a means of supporting Jordanian civil society. Local VPOs could be established to vet IOs and CSOs, and to serve as intermediaries between them and local donors. Local donors might be more inclined to support civil society if they know that VPOs are doing the necessary vetting and are making sure that funding is used with a view to ensuring impact.

4. *Help civil society improve its public image*. The assessment underscored civil society's generally unfavorable public image. This is a serious problem that, among other consequences, makes it more difficult for CSOs to build grassroots constituencies; undermines the readiness of local donors to contribute to the sector; and helps perpetuate civil society's tendency to look at donors for salvation. Since image does not just reflect performance but impacts it as well, image deficits must be addressed through image-specific programming. First, the sector's success stories should be publicized (a task that

could be undertaken by some of the IOs mentioned above or by NGOs with proven public communication capabilities). This effort would require keeping track of tangible achievements by CSOs in specific sectors and geographical areas, and finding ways of communicating to diverse audiences what is compelling about their work. Second, the public communication and messaging skills of IOs and individual CSOs should be developed as well. Third, technical assistance could be deployed to help the sector develop a comprehensive and compelling public communication strategy. This strategy should reflect a grasp of the nature of the main charges leveled at civil society by the public, government officials, and others, and it should entail crafting one or more relevant "counter-narratives," to debunk misunderstandings, distortions, and misrepresentations. Success stories could be folded into these counter-narratives.

5. *Support civic-education programming that advances knowledge of civil society*. The fieldwork confirmed that Jordanians have, at best, a vague, distorted, and inaccurate understanding of what civil society actually is – let alone of what it does, can, or should contribute to the country's political and socioeconomic progress. Yet until people develop a better grasp of those issues, and in particular, a greater appreciation for civil society's added value, the returns on assistance to the sector will remain modest at best. The educational system constitutes an important part of this problem. As young Jordanians go through it, they are introduced neither to the concept of civil society, nor to the broader analytical and conceptual backdrop to make sense of it; that is part of a larger problem. As the Youth Assessment conducted in 2014 for USAID noted, Jordan's educational system does not promote civic knowledge or participation. So by the time donors "invest" in activities meant to "empower" youth in the public sphere, these youth already display a combination of apathy, resignation, and feelings of uselessness and disenfranchisement, and their attitude toward such activities feature a mix of skepticism and cynicism.

Targeted civic-education programming along three main tracks could help address these issues. The first track would comprise activities intended to provide civil society activists with a "thicker" understanding of civil society and the role it has played in a variety of contexts to help respond to a multitude of problems. Experiences would have to be carefully selected to resonate with Jordanians by being relevant to the challenges Jordan currently confronts or is likely to face in future. The second and more challenging track would entail technical support for the development of new high-school and university-level curricula on civics, and for related teachers and faculty training. As the Youth Assessment recommended, the third track might involve support for extracurricular activities that nurture youth's interest in becoming more civically engaged, and that provide them with the required skills.

6. *Ensure congruence in programming*. Interviews and FGDs repeatedly pointed to two types of disconnect affecting civil society in Jordan. The first disconnect is between CBO/NGO activities and community needs. CSOs often are blamed for programming that is not consistent with what their alleged constituencies most want or need. The second disconnect is between the content of donors' assistance and CSOs' specific needs in light of their distinct profile. Donors often carry out "capacity-building" projects that are misaligned with the specific strengths, weaknesses, and level of organizational maturity of recipient CSOs. Technical assistance may not target the right persons in the organization; it may be inconsistent with the kind of support the CSO most needs or wants; and it may concentrate excessively on processes (e.g., financial systems and M&E procedures) at the expense of a focus on seeking to affect the outlook, management style, way of thinking, and priorities of decision-makers within the organization. Sometimes assistance entails an attempt to develop skills, approaches, and systems that are too complex to be practical and useful to CSOs given their stage in organizational development. As a result, the efforts do not lead to improvements that can be sustained after assistance ends.

In light of these findings, congruence should be elevated into a guiding principle for civil society assistance. "Congruence" is used here to refer to two imperatives. First, recipient CSOs should provide tangible and specific evidence that they are being responsive to the needs of their communities or issue-based constituencies. Specific steps include requiring community needs assessments to ensure that this dimension of congruence is realized. Second, programming should be designed and implemented to be sensitive to the distinct characteristics of recipient CSOs and the environment in which they operate. A given intervention should be attuned to the recipient CSO's level of organizational maturity, its outstanding needs, the skills of its staff, and the vision (or lack thereof) of its leadership. For this to occur, it may be necessary to support fewer organizations and better tailor the assistance to their various needs and profiles.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Objectives

Through targeted technical assistance and grants, USAID has long supported civil society in Jordan, seeking to enhance its role, capacities, influence and ability to contribute to key national objectives. The primary USAID civil society program currently operating in the kingdom is the Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program, which will be entering its third year in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region and Jordan since CIS's inception, and in light of USAID's continued commitment to supporting the civil society sector (CSS), in early 2015 the Mission requested a CSS assessment and a CIS program evaluation to inform CIS's third-year workplan, which will be developed in October 2015. USAID also decided the assessment would be conducted first, so that its findings could feed into the evaluation, the CIS workplan, and broader USAID civil society programming. This document presents the results of the assessment. Its three primary objectives are: 1) To provide an up-to-date, detailed and empirically-grounded analysis of the CSS and the challenges it faces; 2) To facilitate the forthcoming evaluation of the CIS program by offering a comprehensive view of the background against which that program operates; and 3) To rely on fieldwork findings to suggest intervention priorities for USAID's civil society assistance programming, including, but not limited to, those that may be carried out through CIS.

The assessment's Statement of Work can be found in Annex I.

Methodology

In addition to an extensive literature review, the assessment relies primarily on fieldwork conducted between May 24 and June 18, 2015. Prior to the onset of the fieldwork, consultations were held with CIS program staff, civil society activists and government representatives so as to inform the design of the assessment, refine data collection tools, and ensure stakeholders' cooperation. The fieldwork consisted of 73 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) held in six governorates: two in northern Jordan (Mafraq and Irbid), two in the central region (Amman and Zarqa), and two in the south (Ma`an and Tafileh).[3] Interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of the sector and/or their affiliation or interaction with it through their professional experience.[4] They consisted of Government of Jordan (GoJ) officials;[5] parliamentarians and former parliamentarians; mayors from the six selected governorates; leaders and staff of civil society organizations (CSOs);[6] civil society experts;[7] representatives of donors whose programming includes civil society assistance; and staff from USAID's implementing partners (IPs). Interviews relied on interview guides that were developed before the beginning of fieldwork for each category of respondents.[8] These guides were designed to preserve the potential for relatively free-flowing conversations, while ensuring that

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[3] Amman and Zarqa were selected because they are the most populous governorates, with more than 70 percent of the country's population. Mafraq and Irbid were selected because of the high concentration of Syrian refugees in them. The governorates in the south were selected randomly.

[4] See Annex III for a participant summary of interviews and focus groups held.

[5] GoJ interviewees consisted of a cross-section of officials at the national, governorate, and local levels. At the national level, the emphasis was on ministries that engage more heavily than others with civil society actors. Efforts also were made to capture the views on civil society of officials who do not engage with civil society actors directly, but who are affiliated with key decision-making institutions (such as the Royal Court).

[6] The sample was designed to reflect the regional and sectoral diversity of Jordanian civil society. It included activists affiliated with CSOs working in different thematic areas, some of which had received USAID funding while others had not.

[7] Civil society experts were defined as Jordanians with experience working on civil society issues and/or with specific knowledge of the sector and the role it plays in Jordan's development. The sample included academics, journalists, lawyers, and public figures.

[8] The interview guides can be found in Annex VII.

discussions would remain focused on the assessment's overarching questions. By creating a semi-standardized format,[9] they facilitated reliable, comparative analysis of data, including thorough triangulation of findings. FGDs were conducted with management and staff of community based organizations (CBOs) that received USAID funding and CBOs that did not, and were conducted in the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Tafileh. FGDs with mayors and municipal council members took place in Amman, Zarqa, and Ma`an.

Annex IV profiles key informants and focus group participants.[10]

Organization of the Report

The report proceeds in six steps. **Section One** offers a general introduction to Jordanian civil society, focusing on the laws, regulations, practices, and the broader political dynamics (domestic and regional) that shape its operations and affect the space it enjoys. Section One also includes a mapping of the sector and examines the main continuities and changes in it over the past decade. **Section Two** zeroes-in on the nature and extent of civil society's contribution to six critical national objectives: social-sector development; economic growth; improved service delivery; political reform; countering violent extremism (CVE); and coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis. **Section Three** concentrates on how donors have engaged with civil society, highlighting how that engagement has affected, and frequently distorted, civil society's priorities and operations. **Section Four** examines perceptions of civil society by the general public, civil society activists, civil society experts, government officials, and donors. It also investigates civil society activists' views of government's relationship to, and effect on, civil society; government officials' opinions regarding the ways in which donors have engaged with civil society; and civil society's perceptions of the same issue. **Section Five** builds upon previous sections to highlight the key challenges that civil society in Jordan confronts, and the main opportunities it could access as it seeks to increase its contributions to the national objectives. A detailed **conclusion** explores the implications of the findings for USAID programming.

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[9] Questions asked of each informant were tailored to consider topic sensitivities or the specific value-added of a given category of interviewees. The relative emphasis placed on some questions as opposed to others reflected the identity of the stakeholder.
[10]Discussion guides for FGDs were tailored to reflect the identity of group participants.

SECTION I: ENVIRONMENT, PROFILE AND TRENDS

Operating Environment

The space that CSOs enjoy is influenced heavily by three contextual variables: the Law on Societies, key provisions in other laws that are particularly relevant to civil society operations, and specific domestic and regional dynamics.

The Law on Societies

Two laws passed in 2008 and 2009 govern most CSOs, the majority of which are known as "societies."[11] These two laws (jointly referred to below as "the Law on Societies") create a restrictive regulatory environment for civil society activity, the main characteristics of which are as follows.

General Provisions

To be legal, a society needs to have at least seven members, have open membership, and be registered with the Societies Registrar ("the Registrar").[12] Registration requires approval by the Registrar.[13] Unregistered societies are prohibited.[14] Upon registration, a society is assigned a supervisory ministry ("relevant ministry") based on its objectives and activities.[15] Overseeing the society then falls under the purview of that ministry.

Notable Restrictions[16]

1) *Registration is mandatory*. The law does not require the Registrar to provide justification for denying registration nor does it spell-out clear criteria for approval, thus providing the Registrar with total discretion in this area.[17] Individuals who (even unknowingly) associate with an unregistered CSO are subject to criminal penalties. Foreign organizations (or organizations that have one or more non-Jordanians as one of their founding members) are subject to even tighter registration requirements.[18] In practice, registration is rarely denied.[19]

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[11] The 2008 *Law on Societies* (Law 51 of 2008) was amended in 2009 by the *Law Amending the Law on Societies* (Law 22 of 2009), which was a partial response to the criticisms that the 2008 law had generated. While "societies" are the most common type of CSOs in Jordan, CSOs also comprise other entities, including "not-for-profit Companies" (NfPCs, also known as "private companies" or "private societies").

[12] Even though it is attached to the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Registrar is an independent entity, not a department of the ministry. The Registrar is managed by the Registrar Board which consists of 11 members: the Minister of Social Development (chairman); the Secretary of the Registrar (Deputy); representatives of the ministries of Interior, Culture, Tourism, the Environment, and Political Development; as well as four representatives of civil society appointed by the Council of Ministers (CoM) for a two-year term.

[13] Once the Registrar receives an application it has 60 days to make a decision. If it has not responded within that time period, the society's application is approved. If one of the society's founders is non-Jordanian or a corporate entity, special approval of the CoM is required.

[14] The Penal Code stipulates that any individual who associates with an unregistered society is subject to imprisonment for up to two years.

[15] There are five such "relevant ministries" (see footnote 10).

[16] ICNL, "Comparative Study of Laws Governing Civil Society."

[17] As ICNL observes, "such discretion … constitutes a violation of international law and best practices" ("Comparative Study of Laws Governing Civil Society," p. 10). A more liberal framework would circumscribe the grounds for refusing registration to the application containing one or more specific violation(s) of the Law on Societies.

[18] In such instance a special approval is required from the full CoM.

[19] In 2011 six or seven out of approximately 800 applications were rejected (USAID, "The 2011 CSO Sustainability Report for the Middle East and North Africa," p. 25).

2) *The law prohibits societies from having "political objectives" and from engaging in "political activities."* It stipulates that "political activities" are the prerogative of political parties. However, the 1992 Political Parties Law does not clearly define "political objectives" and "political activities," which makes it difficult to determine whether a society's activities are "political." A new Political Parties Draft Law, passed in June by Parliament does not clarify this matter. This lack of clarity provides the government with broad discretion: a society engaged in any form of activity that can be described as "political" can be denied registration, or be dissolved for being in violation of the law, while another conducting similar activities but viewed more favorably by the authorities will not encounter those problems. The prohibition on "political activities" creates a significant hurdle for CSOs keen to operate as vehicles for citizen political engagement.

3) *Access to foreign funding requires the prior approval of the Council of Ministers (CoM).*[20] This provision greatly constrains CSOs' access to resources, since local funding is limited and local donors generally do not donate to CSOs that do not operate under royal patronage, or that are not charities. Moreover, the grounds for rejecting foreign funding are broad and those tasked with enforcing the law benefit from great discretion in this regard. Prior approval from the MoSD is also required for societies to collect donations from the public.

4) *Legal provisions regarding CSOs' internal governance (their structure, management and operations) are regarded as constraining.*[21] All associations must use the bylaw template created by the Registrar, rather than using governance models that are best suited to their objectives, activities and membership. Provisions do not specify the accounting standards that societies should use when submitting their annual balance sheets to their supervisory ministry, thus allowing officials wide discretionary power to allege irregularities; at the very least, it creates potential inconsistencies in the application of the law, since different supervisory ministries may operate according to different standards when reviewing CSOs' financial records.

5) *The law grants the government unlimited access to CSOs' meetings, premises, and records.* It does not offer clear guidance on how the government is supposed to audit societies, allowing significant and subjective discretion to the government. That said, the GoJ has been conservatively rather than aggressively exercising these powers. A society is obliged to inform the Registrar Secretary and the relevant minister of the date of its general assembly at least two weeks in advance (or the meeting will be deemed illegal). Both officials may appoint delegates to represent them at that meeting.

6) *The government has broad grounds to disband a society.*[22] As of this writing, a **new Societies Draft Law** is sitting at the Legislation and Opinion Bureau. It has not yet been made public nor has it been presented to the CoM or Parliament. It is widely believed to be even more restrictive than the current legislation. If it is enacted, civil society experts and activists alike expect it to: a) further constrain CSOs' ability to access foreign funding; b) create more cumbersome procedures for registering as a CSO; and c) make it more difficult for foreign NGOs to register in Jordan and access funding. As importantly, the draft law is believed to require that registered CSOs submit regular reports on their operational expenses and the salaries of each of their staff members. Some interviewees voiced concern that the authorities could use these reports as a means of "blackmailing" certain CSOs. By Jordanian standards, the salaries of NGO leaders and staff members are high. Selective public release of

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[20] Upon receiving the application for foreign funding, the CoM has 30 days to make a decision. The request is considered approved if the CoM has not responded within that time. The requirement of prior approval by the CoM to access foreign funding violates international law, Article 22 of the ICCPR, and best practices.

[21] Many of those provisions are contained in the 2010 Regulation on Standard Provisions of Societies Bylaws.

[22] For instance, a society can be disbanded if it has not conducted activities for a full year (the law does not specify what constitutes "inactivity"); if it used foreign funding without approval by the CoM; or if it has twice violated the same provision of the Law on Societies, and has failed to remedy the situation within two months of having been notified of the problem.

salary-related information could therefore be used to undermine the public image of CSOs that the authorities deem to be "problematic" or "troublesome." It would play-into the already widespread narrative of organizations that receive foreign funding nominally intended to improve the lot of average Jordanians, but that instead end up in the pockets of the NGO activists for personal enrichment.

Other Relevant Laws and Draft Laws

In addition to the Law on Societies, other laws similarly curb the freedom of expression and association that civil society needs in order to thrive, and hinder NGOs' ability to engage in the policy-making process and to participate in local and national debates about policy issues. In the past few years, several of these laws have been revised to be more restrictive, making constraints even more significant.

1) The **Penal Code** contains several provisions that restrict free expression. Article 149 criminalizes "undermining the political regime of the kingdom or inciting opposition to it." Anyone accused of attempting to "subvert the system of government in the kingdom" can be punished with a hard labor sentence. Moreover, the Penal Code classifies such charges as related to terrorism. Those accused under Article 149 therefore fall under the jurisdiction of the controversial State Security Court, which lacks independence from the executive branch. The Penal Code also sanctions vague notions such as "disturbing [Jordan's] relations with a foreign state." It features a vague definition of what constitutes "defamation" or "libel" of government officials (including treating such persons "disrespectfully"). Article 191 provides for harsh penalties (up to two years in prison) for those accused of having defamed public figures or the institutions they serve.[23]

2) Article 4 of the 2004 **Law on Public Gatherings** requires that the relevant authorities be notified 48 hours in advance of an assembly or demonstration. Absent such notification, assemblies are considered unlawful and punishable under the law.[24] The Assembly Law also contains vague language that makes it easy for the authorities to legally disperse public gatherings and subsequently penalize assembly participants.

3) Under the 2007 **Press and Publications Law** (as amended in September 2012) journalists can be fined for not adhering to "Islamic values" or failing to be "objective." Under Article 5, publications are prohibited from publishing content at odds with the "values of Arab and Islamic nations." Article 38(b) prohibits the publication of material that involves "slander, libel or insult" of an individual or that affects his/her personal freedoms; the particulars of which forms of speech and what kind of material fall under Article 38(b) are left unspecified. The amendments passed in 2012 restrict freedom of expression for online publications and make website owners responsible for content posted by visitors to their websites.

4) Jordan's **Anti-Terrorism Law** (ATL), passed in 2006 and amended in June 2014, contains provisions that equate political dissent with support for terrorism, or involvement in it, and that provide harsh penalties to such "offenses." Those who donate to charities that operate as fronts for terrorist organizations can be charged under the law, even if they were not aware of the connection between the organization to which they have donated and the terrorist activity.[25] In June 2014, the ATL broadened the definition of terrorist acts to include activities such as the previously mentioned article in the Penal Code against "disturbing [Jordan's] relations with a foreign state" with related penalties of three to

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[23] Article 191 specifically identifies the public figures and institution in question as comprising Parliament and MPs, courts, public administrations, the army, and military personnel on duty.

[24] Article 10 stipulates penalties of "no less than a month and no more than three months, or a fine of no less than JD 200 and no more than JD 1,000, or both penalties."

[25] What falls under the label of "terrorist organizations" can be a matter of controversy in the region, even among those in "the political mainstream." That is particularly true with regard to Hamas and entities tied to it.

twenty years in prison.[26] The 2014 amendments to the ATL broadly define a terrorist act as "any act that intends to cause damage to the environment or disturbance of public life." The amendments also created new constraints on internet activities that are inconsistent with democratic norms.

5) The **Income Tax Law** (Law 75 of 1985) allows for donations to societies with charitable status to be exempted from income tax (up to one-quarter of the donor's taxable income). However, that provision does not apply to societies that do not enjoy charitable status, which is granted or denied by the CoM.

6) Civil society experts, civil society activists, and municipalities' officials and staff members interviewed generally agree that the **decentralization and municipalities draft laws** currently under review in parliament would do little to enhance the role that CBOs play in local decision-making. Instead, their prevalent fear is that if it is enacted, the proposed laws will create yet another layer of bureaucratic oversight and regulation, attached to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA), and add to the existing set of constraining rules and administrative and political control associated with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and supervisory (or "relevant") ministries.

Other Operational Environment Variables

In addition to laws and regulations directly relevant to civil society activity, broader contextual variables shape the sector's potential for success and growth. Some reflect regional developments, others are Jordan-specific, and still others lie at the intersection of both arenas. The most significant such variables are as follows.

1) **The regional crisis**. The chaos and bloodshed in neighboring Syria and Iraq, civil and proxy wars from Libya to Yemen, the grave threat to the region posed by *Daesh* and other violent extremist (VE) groups, and the "authoritarian restoration" and associated radicalization and violence in Egypt have all considerably heightened security concerns in Jordan. These regional developments have negatively impacted civil society activity in several critical regards. First, they have diminished the population's inclination to press for reform and change, issues that could be perceived as potentially destabilizing. By reducing people's appetite for reform and change, and by leading them to place far more importance instead on the preservation of physical security and political stability, they have reduced the potential audience and clout of NGOs concerned with democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) issues. Second, these regional developments have created legitimate concern among GoJ officials that certain civil society actors and forms of civil society activity might operate as conduits for destabilization of the kingdom. They have also reinforced the predisposition of many such officials to be suspicious of any form of genuine civic engagement and to see related activities as an implicit or explicit challenge to the state. In the words of one interviewee, the current regional situation has fed into many officials' "obsession with control" and instinctive distrust of developments that are not closely monitored by the state – tendencies that have long hindered civil society in Jordan. Finally, regional unrest and violence have sometimes provided excuses for clamping down on civil society activity (and on free expression and association) in the name of national security.

2) **The Syrian refugee crisis** has had a major impact on civil society, prompting many CSOs to follow donors' lead and abruptly reorient their activities toward tackling this new challenge. Driving this process was the funding that donors and international humanitarian organizations made available to address the needs of Syrian refugees. To gain access to these new and sizable resources, many CSOs

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[26] In November 2014, Zaki Bani Irsheid, the Muslim Brotherhood's deputy secretary-general, was arrested and charged under this provision after he criticized the UAE.

suddenly refocused their programming accordingly, underscoring once again the extent to which civil society in the kingdom is donor-driven and lacking in strategic direction.[27]

3) **Official attitudes and non-regulatory levers of control.** Civil society is influenced heavily by the attitudes of government officials and by the many non-regulatory tools these officials can activate to monitor and interfere with its activities. While one can detect within the GoJ a broad range of attitudes toward civil society (see Section IV for elaboration), pervasive distrust and the perception of civil society activists as disloyal and intent on promoting alien values and/or foreign agendas are among them. These perceptions appear to be particularly pronounced among second- and third-tier officials who also happen to be those who, on a daily basis, can make life much easier or far more complicated for civil society activists. CSOs big and small are at the mercy of an official's readiness to give a green light and to sign the relevant paper or conversely his/her tendency to drag their feet and create impediments that are not provided for under the law, both of which can make a world of difference to civil society activists. In addition, while the security apparatus no longer monitors the sector as closely as it once did and is less prone to meddle with it, NGOs active in "sensitive areas" or viewed as "troublesome" by the authorities can still experience interference by the security services (for instance during elections to their boards). To bring particular CSOs under control, force them into compliance, or compel their leaders and staff to simply give up, the authorities can resort to various forms of intimidation and harassment (e.g., detailed audits of accounts and records and public defamation campaigns that entail the dissemination of allegations and rumors). Side-by-side with such tactics, "softer-edge" forms of co-option and manipulation may rely on the selective distribution of rewards (e.g., public recognition, access to decision-makers, granting permits, licenses and other favors) to some and the withholding of them from others.

4) **The primacy of discretionary power, personal relationships, and political access**. As the laws that shape civil society activity contain so many vague provisions open to contradictory interpretations, officials enjoy a great deal of discretion in applying them. This situation creates uncertainty and a keen sense of vulnerability for civil society activists who never know exactly which provision of which law will be invoked, in which way, and when. A related factor is the importance of being able to build personal relationships with decision-makers. Cultivating and maintaining that access is critical to an NGO's ability to "get things done" because of the doors it opens and the means it can provide to bypass regulations and avoid restrictions that may constrain other CSOs. Enjoying the goodwill of influential figures also represents a vital form of insurance if and when one's NGO comes under attack. Being able to harness the support from key officials and segments of the bureaucracy may help an NGO resist the pressure placed on it by other officials and/or government institutions. While this applies to all CSOs and at all levels (national, governorate and local), it is particularly relevant to national-level DRG NGOs. After all, since the *Law on Societies* bans CSOs from engaging in "political activities," it can easily be invoked to thwart the work of CSOs engaged in policy analysis or advocacy. Against this backdrop, two key factors have enabled organizations such as the al-Hayat Center to operate on political terrain: 1) the credibility they have built for themselves due to the professionalism they have displayed and their tangible achievements; and 2) the support they enjoy from key decision-

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[27] An informal agreement was reached in 2013 between donors active on the Syrian refugee issue and the GoJ and Jordanian CSOs to address the discontent of many Jordanians distraught at the concentration of relief efforts on Syrian refugees, and the lack of attention paid to the immense needs of the communities hosting those refugees or living near-by. The agreement set a percentage (generally about 50 percent) of foreign funds allotted to cope with the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis would toward the needs of host communities. This belated course correction fell short of providing a solution to the emergency at hand, particularly in the north. Revealingly, government officials in Irbid did not want to talk about civil society; they were only willing to discuss what donors will do to help the region cope with the burdens and tensions created by an influx of refugees that had overwhelmed local capacities (including those of civil society).

makers and other influential figures, and their ability to tap into that support when they face a concerted effort to undermine them.

5) **"What can you do for me?" and "location, location, location."** Among the many other variables that shape civil society activity, two can be highlighted briefly here. One is the extent to which a CSO's thematic focus and capacities enable it to support or complement government action ("What can you do for me?"). As a rule, the more that is the case, the greater the space the authorities will allow for that organization. Consequently, CSOs that enjoy freedom to operate often denied to others include: those that fill in some of the gaping holes left by the state's public-services delivery and welfare systems; and those that implement projects consistent with the priorities spelled out in the various "plans" and "national strategies" that the GoJ unrolls on a regular basis.

> **"Either they are ignorant of their rights under the law, or feel they cannot afford to take advantage of those rights."**
>
> *Interviewee speaking of CSO's based outside of Amman*

Whether a CSO is based in Amman or the governorates can also determine how they are treated ("location, location, location"), particularly when it comes to the ability to conduct activities that suspicious officials may view as "political" in nature. As one civil society expert interviewed explains, "It is hard to do anything there [in the governorates] because of the exaggerated powers of governors; it is much easier here [in Amman]."[28] He mentioned the ability to organize public debates as an example. As noted earlier, under the 2004 *Law on Public Gatherings*, a CSO that seeks to organize a public debate is required only to *notify* the authorities of that intent; it does not have to request permission, nor is the latter needed. In the governorates, however, the reality is far more complicated than these straightforward provisions provide. The relevant authorities (the office of the Governor) expect or will request from the relevant CSO a long list of detailed information about the meeting (participants, topics, etc.), continuously adding requests for more information. The interviewee explains that this treatment by officials often prompts local CSOs to ask Amman-based ones to conduct activities in their stead, described as, "Please come and organize this for us; you can do these things, we can't." The interviewee added, "You feel so sorry for them. Either they are ignorant of their rights under the law [they are not legally required to ask for permission to organize the event], or feel they cannot afford to take advantage of those rights." The critical point here, is that from an 'operational environment' perspective, the legal requirement of notifying the authorities often over-extends in the governorates to become a de facto permission requirement under which organizers of a public event feel the need to gain explicit authorization of the governor or his representative before holding that event.

Mapping of the Sector

The civil society landscape in Jordan is complex and does not lend itself to a clear-cut typology. Nonetheless, classification may be framed by three sets of variables:[29]

a) The registration status of CSOs (whether they are formally registered), the regulatory framework that governs them (the Law on Societies or the Companies Law), their supervisory ministry (the MoSD or the MoIT), and how they came into existence (by

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[28] Civil society expert and prominent media commentator, Amman, May 27, 2015.
[29] The typology and analysis below relies on extensive discussions with CIS staff as well as a review of the relevant literature, including Winkie Williamson and Huda Hakki, *Mapping Study of Non State Actors in Jordan*, 2010, European Union; Ana Echagüe and Helen Michou, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: Jordan*, 2011, FRIDE and Foundation for the Future; and Lamia Raei, *Mapping of Non-Partisan Political and Social Groups in Jordan*, 2012.

applying for legal status with the Registrar, as in the case of societies, or via royal decree, as in the case of RONGOs).

b) The level at which they operate: are they locally based (as in the case of CBOs)? Do they instead operate at the governorate or national level (as with regard to NGOs)? Alternatively, as is true of RONGOs, are they influential, visible and active from the national level down to the grassroots, due to their significant resources and outreach capacities across governorates?

c) The scope or scale of their operations, and their degree of organizational sophistication or maturity.

Using these three sets of variables, Jordanian CSOs can be grouped into seven main categories: 1) Community-based organizations (CBOs); 2) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs); 3) Umbrella organizations (UOs); 4) "Royal Non-Governmental Organizations" (RONGOs); 5) "Not-for-profit companies;" 6) Cooperatives; and 7) Informal groups and local initiatives. In addition, while not "CSOs" per se, "coalitions," "alliances" or "networks" of CSOs represent potentially significant civil society entities in that they can help address the internal fragmentation that has been one of Jordanian civil society's main weaknesses.

CBOs

The vast majority of CSOs in the country are CBOs, which are registered with the MoSD and governed by the *Law on Societies*. CBOs operate at the grassroots level, in an area (typically a rural community) that is geographically very circumscribed.[30] Most are engaged in small-scale charity activity, and they neither seek to expand their reach nor have the capacity to do so. Out of approximately 4,650 registered societies (as of July 2015), an estimated 80 percent are CBOs. The overwhelming majority of them provide a limited range of welfare and relief services. Most of them are inactive, or they become active only very episodically and for one-time activities that leave no trace of broader impact. Orphans, persons with disabilities, and refugees (primarily Syrians now, but also Iraqis and Palestinians) are among their main constituencies. Few are specialized. They confine themselves strictly to basic service delivery and usually show no interest in (or capacity for) advocacy or public-policy dialogue.

CBOs' capacities are often rudimentary, their internal governance structures under-developed, and their existence precarious and dependent on their ability to continue to secure scarce funding. They lack paid professional staff and are volunteer-based. However, since there are approximately 3,700 CBOs in the country, one predictably finds a range of capacities and experiences among them. Some, particularly those that have received technical assistance, have at least reasonably professional management procedures and operating systems and understand donors and their expectations. A few are developing a rights-based approach to their work, seeking to enhance awareness about such issues as the right to work or the right to education. Nevertheless, these are the exceptions, not the rule. CBOs generally reflect the conservative, patriarchal and traditional values of the communities in which they operate, and their ability to alter mentalities and serve as vehicles for broad political and social change is limited accordingly.[31] That being said, CBOs do provide venues for civic engagement, discussion of public issues, and expression of opinions, and in those respects they can provide at least a degree of empowerment for excluded or marginalized constituencies.

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[30] While CBOs can be found in urban areas, the division of CBOs across the urban/rural divide favors rural communities in a way that is out of proportion with the distribution of the population as a whole. This phenomenon may reflect a variety of factors: urban communities overall have better access to services; CBOs often are formed around family and tribal ties, which are stronger in rural areas; and the sense of community cohesion and shared interests is stronger in relatively small and homogenous rural communities than in larger and more diverse urban ones.

[31] Mapping of non-state actors, p. 20.

NGOs

Unlike CBOs, NGOs function at either the national or governorate level. The vast majority however do not have a presence outside of Amman or the city in which they are based in terms of a consistent and strategic stream of activities that targets constituents outside their immediate geographic circles. Also unlike CBOs, which are primarily or exclusively volunteer-based, NGOs often have one or more paid staff. Their capacities tend to be far more developed than those of CBOs, though there is a range in this regard. Between 100 and 200 of the over 4,600 CSOs officially registered in Jordan today are professional: they have clearly defined (or reasonably clearly defined) missions, feature one or more permanent employees, and have adequate or good management structures and financial systems. They have developed expertise, usually as a result of technical assistance, due to implementing or participating in the implementation of donor projects, or by providing consultancy services to donors. Many are active in areas such as the environment or youth empowerment. A handful – for instance Mizan, which specializes in legal services and advocacy, as well as the al-Hayat Center, the Identity Center, and the Al-Quds Center, which engage in policy-analysis, monitoring, and/or advocacy – have a track record of achievements and have built a positive reputation for themselves. But these organizations are few and far between.

NGOs, too, often deliver services, but these services usually are of a specialized and technical nature, as opposed to being charity-oriented (as in the case of CBOs). Furthermore, NGOs typically have objectives broader than mere service delivery: they seek to advocate or mobilize constituencies around certain causes and/or engage the authorities in policy dialogue. National NGOs concerned with persons with disabilities or victims of abuse, for instance, provide affected constituencies with relevant services, but they also often seek to advocate on those issues or shape public policy about them.

Umbrella Organizations

Umbrella organizations (UOs) represent clusters of CSOs active in a given field such as charity work, around a common theme, i.e., women's empowerment, or to advocate on behalf of a particular constituency, i.e., people with disabilities. They operate as intermediary bodies between those CSOs and the state. They aim to represent the interests of their constituent member organizations; to facilitate sharing of ideas and coordination among them; to give them greater weight and visibility in the public arena; and, above all, to negotiate on their behalf with the authorities, based on the logic that there is "power in numbers" and that UOs will amplify the voices and impact of their constituent entities. Their combined membership was estimated at around 750,000 Jordanians in 2010.[32]

There are still relatively few UOs in Jordan and most have limited organizational capacities and only a few have paid staff. One of the most influential is the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) which has been in existence for over sixty years. Approximately 1,100 CBOs across the country are affiliated with the GUVS. GUVS receives funding from the state, enjoys the support of decision-makers across the kingdom, and has representatives on many policy-making bodies at the national, governorate and municipal levels.[33] Three other powerful UOs, with branches in each governorate and a presence in most municipalities, deal with women's issues and cooperate under the semi-governmental Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), which provides them with access to decision-making bodies.[34] Between them, they have several thousand active members who in turn can mobilize tens of

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[32] Mapping of non-state actors, p. 12.
[33] Mapping of non-state actors, p. 28.
[34] The three UOs in question are the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) and the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW). In the wake of the 1995 Beijing Conference, the state created the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) to advance women's causes, promote Jordan's commitment under the Beijing Platform, and coordinate the work of women's umbrella organizations. Princess Basma presides over the JNCW.

thousands, for instance to encourage women to vote or run for elected office.[35] Other UOs include those that represent charities, cooperatives, and business associations: OFAN (Opportunities for all Networks), which brings together NGOs and CBOs working with people with disabilities; *Nashmiyat*, which creates opportunities for information exchange and communication among women who serve on municipal councils; and *Sham'a* (candle), which provides a forum for women's NGOs dedicated to combating violence against women.

RONGOs

"Royal NGOs," or RONGOs, are established by royal decree, function under royal patronage and are headed by a member of the royal family. By virtue of their position, they are allowed to avoid most of the restrictions that constrain other organizations in the sector They typically focus on issues that relate to poverty alleviation, social and economic development, and the environment, though most also conduct activities aimed at empowering women and underprivileged groups.[36] The following features, all of which can be traced back to their royal patronage, set them apart from other CSOs in Jordan.

1) *They enjoy the most space and have easy access to key decision-makers*. They are not subject to, or can bypass, the administrative restrictions that constrain most other CSOs. In fact, the bureaucracy typically goes out of its way to facilitate their work. Because of the "political cover" from which they benefit, they can engage in advocacy and lobbying efforts far more easily than other CSOs.

2) Unlike civil society at large, which receives little attention or a bad rap from the media, *RONGOs benefit from significant and favorable media coverage of their activities*. That, and the myriad of services they offer to the population, also explains why *RONGOs' public image generally is far more positive than those of civil society as a whole*, especially in rural communities where they help hundreds of thousands of people cope with adversity in their daily lives.

3) *They have access to the most resources*. The state supports them generously, and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) often contracts them as partners to carry out large projects. RONGOs appeal to donors because of their proximity to the royal family; their ready access to ministers and other key decision-makers; the ease of working with them due to their unique status and extensive capacities; their professionalism and ability to reach deep into communities across the nation; and their reputation for "getting things done," including in areas deemed sensitive and where donors themselves, or even other CSOs, cannot easily venture. By working with or through RONGOs, as opposed to other CSOs, donors are more likely to avoid allegations that they are seeking to impose "foreign agendas" or "alien values" on Jordan. RONGOs help put a Jordanian face on a particular project, while enhancing significantly the likelihood that that project will come to fruition. Most private sector donations go to RONGOs, in part because businesspeople often see support for RONGOs as an opportunity to develop relationships with the royal family. RONGOs also are attractive to businesses that seek to project a sense of corporate social responsibility, but shy away from CSOs either because

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[35] Mapping of non-state actors, p. 27.

[36] The most widely recognized RONGOs include the Jordan River Foundation (headed by Queen Rania); the King Abdullah Fund for Development; the Noor al-Hussein Foundation (under the patronage of Queen Noor); and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), headed by Princess Basma. JOHUD, which focuses on combating unemployment and poverty, reducing their effects, and empowering deprived constituencies, exemplifies the nationwide infrastructure of RONGOs. It features 50 human development centers across the country (usually referred to as "Princess Basma Centers for Human Development") that provide in-kind assistance to underprivileged families as well as financial aid to deserving students of impoverished backgrounds. By relying on the private sector's readiness to engage with JOHUD, these centers enable young people to identify job opportunities. They also organize training activities to increase the skills and marketability of those youth. The upcoming Crown Prince Hussein Foundation is expected to join the ranks of important RONGOS in Jordan. The foundation will focus on supporting local communities and developing the talents of Jordanian youth and enhancing their role in Jordan's development.

of their negative public image and reputation for waste, inefficiency, and corruption, or because they are unaware of their initiatives.

   4) *The vast majority of the most capable and professional CSOs are RONGOs.* RONGOs have strategic plans and generally strong standards of government and management. They also have a highly developed infrastructure and considerable reach across the national territory, and employ experienced and competent staff who constitute valued interlocutors for senior decision-makers.

   5) *Because of the above features, RONGOs have the greatest perceived impact within the sector.* They provide a level of social and economic services unmatched by other CSOs. Between them, the three main RONGOs (the Jordan River Foundation, the Noor al-Hussein Foundation, and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, or JOHUD) reach hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries.[37] RONGOs also often issue grants and subcontracts to CBOs and smaller CSOs, and provide intermediary services to them.

During interviews, many civil society activists and experts refused to view RONGOs as part of civil society, on the grounds that they lack the necessary political independence and are not an intermediary between the state and citizens but rather an extension or appendage of the former. They also complained about the "unfair competition" created by RONGOs, which receive a disproportionate percentage of donor funding for the sector and almost all of the financial support from local sources. They described this competition as "unfair" due to the many advantages RONGOs enjoy (including privileged access to government officials and foreign embassies, the ability to receive funds directly from donors, the readiness of the bureaucracy to facilitate their work, and sizable government funding) that are denied to other CSOs.

Not-for-Profit Companies (NfPCs)
Not-for-profit Companies (NfPCs) are registered with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), and governed by the Companies Law No. 73 of 2010. Until that law was passed, many aspiring CSOs registered as NfPCs, not as CSOs, in order to avoid the stringent conditions of the Law on Societies. Registration with the MoIT was straightforward and under the law, access to foreign funding was easier, and the government's ability to meddle in NfPCs' internal operations far more limited, than with regard to CSOs registered under the Law on Societies.[38] Since 2008[39] however new regulations have tightened government control over NfPCs, limited their access to funding, and made it much easier for the authorities to shut down a NfPC or reject its application for registration. The 2010 law eliminated many of the advantages that previously existed for aspiring CSOs to register as NfPCs.

Cooperatives
Cooperatives are for-profit entities under the Jordan Cooperative Corporation.[40] They typically emerge when several individuals (who often are friends or relatives) pool their resources to pursue an income-generating project that they lack the resources to carry out on their own. Whereas CBOs engage in charity, cooperatives constitute vehicles for the economic empowerment of their members.[41] While the project that prompts the establishment of a cooperative is intended to benefit that cooperative's

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[37] Mapping of non-state actors, p. 23.
[38] Organizations such as Mizan (a legal aid organization), the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, and the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists all initially registered as NfPCs.
[39] This date has been amended from 2007 to 2008 based on revisions of when the new regulations started.
[40] The legal framework for cooperatives is Cooperation Law No. (18) for the year 1997.
[41] Commenting on that key difference, a senior government official observed: "If one wants to change the mentality of handouts in the kingdom, cooperatives are the model, not charities." That same official went on to recommend that donors make cooperatives a greater focus of their civil society assistance programming, but added that, in light of their lack of knowledge of this sub-sector, they should conduct a comprehensive mapping of it beforehand.

members, it also often addresses community-based challenges, and therefore may profit a broader group of people. Cooperatives also sometimes begin as income-generating projects, but subsequently expand their mission to include volunteer activities. An estimated 3,000 cooperatives operate in Jordan today.

Informal Groups and Local Initiatives

Within the CSS, informal groups and local initiatives are set apart by their lack of formal structures and the fact that they are not registered entities. The onset of the Arab Spring in early 2011 prompted a rise in the number, activities, and visibility of such groups. Some of them named themselves in reference to a major event (e.g., the Youth Movement of March 24), others after the nature of their demands (e.g., the 1952 Constitution Movement). These groups provided the impetus for, or developed out of, street protests and demonstrations for change. However, the nature of their aspirations and demands were not just different, but often contradictory. Some were focused on socioeconomic issues related to poverty, unemployment, living standards, and the rise in gas prices. Some instead agitated for political change, especially a reform of the constitution to provide for a constitutional monarchy and/or a secular state. Still others were concerned with more circumscribed themes such as corruption, the electoral system, or the excessive interventions of the security services in social and political life. Some linked economic demands with aspirations for social justice and political reform, while others did not. The constituencies behind these movements, and their interests, outlooks and aspirations, varied greatly as well. Some were rooted in Transjordanian (TJ) strongholds in the south, and consisted of individuals with limited education, skills, and job prospects, while others brought together the cosmopolitan, multilingual educated youth of Amman. Most were predominantly youth-led, but not all (e.g., retired military officers of TJ background).

Identity politics and conflicts of interests and visions prevented those movements from merging into a cohesive force for change. Particularly significant in this regard was the TJs vs. Jordanians of Palestinian origins (JPOs) divide. Protests associated with TJ constituencies in southern governorates usually reflected the latter's anger at the state's declining commitment to social welfare and to ensuring TJ communities a guaranteed standard of living. In contrast, groups that appealed primarily to JPOs (and to younger and better-educated TJs) instead often focused on issues of political inclusion and constitutional reform. These divisions created opportunities for the authorities to drive a wedge between these various groups, and those opportunities were seized. In the end, the tentative new force that these groups represented fizzled; due in part to their lack of organization, experience, and know how; the political and ideological differences between them; and to successful maneuvering by the state. As it did, so did the hope that these groups would bring about real change from below and serve as the harbinger of new, less donor-driven and more authentic and effective forms of civic activism.

Still, some of these groups managed to survive, including those that evolved into initiatives (e.g., the "No Honor in Crime" campaign against honor killings, launched in March 2011). New informal groups also have emerged since 2011; most of them are "virtual CSOs" that rely on online activism to draw attention to their causes and appeal to youth who are put off by the donor-driven, opportunistic nature, and undemocratic structures of "professional CSOs.[42]" A few revolve around popular blogs regularly consulted by thousands of young Jordanian citizens; on occasion, these blogs can contribute to a degree of mobilization around issues that are of particular interest to clusters of activists. Nonetheless, the sudden burst of energy that expressed itself through grassroots groups in 2011 quickly dissipated. It has not helped that these groups have generally been unwilling to work with CBOs and NGOs. The former have expressed deep suspicions about the latter and underscored their determination not to "become like them." Meanwhile, CBO and NGO activists have been prone to question the very utility of informal

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[42] Examples of informal groups that emerged during that period include the Al-Koura Movement for Reform, Al-Tafileh Quarter Movement, the Arab Renewal Movement and the Free People of Tafileh Movement.

groups, in particular their ability to contribute to developmental objectives, improved service delivery, or realistic political change.

Continuities and Changes

Continuities

1) *The vast majority of CSOs in Jordan remain charity- and service-delivery focused*, though some of them (mostly RONGOs and a few national NGOs) also tackle broader development issues. CBOs represent approximately 80 percent of all CSOs and are concerned exclusively with community development and the provision of basic humanitarian and relief assistance, while RONGOs engage in charity and development.

2) *The advocacy component of civil society – defined as those CSOs and NGOs for which advocacy is the primary mission – remains extremely small and under-developed.*[43] Within it, advocacy NGOs that concentrate on DRG issues is even smaller. Moreover, the handful of "advocacy NGOs" found in Jordan are based exclusively in Amman and are think tanks or policy institutes as much as advocacy groups.

3) *Civil society remains donor-driven and donor-dependent.* Most CSOs are established first and foremost to access donor funding. As a result, they lack a clear mission and an organic connection to the community or constituency(ies) they claim to serve. Instead, they react to the priorities of donors and thus tend to be project- or activity-driven.

4) *The level of professionalism and quality of governance across the sector remains low overall*, despite islands of (sometimes significant) improvements. Still too few CSOs understand, let alone act on, the need to be mission-driven and to engage in strategic planning. Except for RONGOs, most CSOs still lack clear mission statements and only a few of them show a genuine capacity for strategic thinking. CSOs' boards are typically ineffective and lack genuine power; indeed, understanding of the role and importance of boards remains poor. Most CSOs have weak management systems (with regard to projects, finances, and human resources alike[44]) and display limited transparency at best. They rarely have clear, written codes of conduct, let alone a means of enforcing them. Finally, they remain insufficiently aware of their rights under the law (which, for instance, diminishes the likelihood that they will push back when confronted with low-level functionaries who overstep their legally mandated duties).

5) *There remains a very wide gap between "civil society" and the "society" of which it is supposed to be an emanation*. Instead of developing organically out of society to reflect its needs and aspirations, civil society seems to exist side by side with it. Being largely a creation of donors and being kept alive by them, the sector continues to display artificial and unauthentic features (though some CSOs provide at least partial exceptions to this generalization). The root cause of this problem lies in most CSOs' failure to consult widely and meaningfully with the constituencies and/or communities they claim to represent.

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[43] The weakness of the advocacy element in the sector is reflected not only in the very low number of NGOs that concentrate on lobbying and advocacy, but in most CBOs', CSOs' and NGOs' failure to weave advocacy-type activities into their portfolios. These organizations typically have yet to grasp why advocacy is critical to furthering their service-delivery or development objectives. It is striking, for instance, that CSOs and NGOs committed to children's education generally narrowly approach their mission by seeking to provide (much-needed) services, but fail to appreciate the extent to which advocating for children's rights (including the right to education) is essential to advancing their agenda.

[44] With regard to human resources, the failure to manage volunteers effectively is a particularly consequential problem in light of the sector's heavy reliance on them.

6) *The vast majority of active Jordanian CSOs are still insufficiently specialized and spread themselves too thin.*[45] They are active on too many fronts, and as a result, do not allocate their limited resources effectively.[46]

7) *The sector remains extremely fragmented and the level of cooperation, sharing of ideas, and coordination among CSOs remain low.* CSOs operate with a silo mentality that reflects a combination of cultural, social, and political factors. They have been unable to form durable alliances and coalitions and to articulate a coherent, unifying, and compelling vision of the specific changes (in the social, cultural, political, and socioeconomic domains) to which they aspire, and how they propose to bring about those changes. While CSOs bemoan their inability to team up with each other and work cooperatively on issues, they demonstrate little inclination or capacity to change this state of affairs. Nor is there currently much of an incentive for them to change their ways in this regard, especially as donor funding continues unabated. When national NGOs are pushed by donors to reach out to CBOs, the engagement is typically shallow and does not have much capacity-building value to CBOs, which remain strapped for resources and on the sidelines of Amman-centered advocacy efforts.

8) As the fieldwork confirmed, *most Jordanians still do not understand the role of civil society, nor do they appreciate its existing contributions*, limited as they may be. Media outlets continue to play a generally unhelpful role in this regard; their coverage of civil society remains superficial, frequently negative, and heavily tilted toward RONGOs, which often are the only ones that receive extensive and positive attention.[47]

9) *The extent and quality of the sector's engagement with government entities are still very limited.* (See following sections for elaboration.)

Changes
1) *The sector has experienced exponential growth since the late 2000s.* In the past seven years, the number of officially registered CSOs has tripled, from about 1,500 in 2008 to over 4,600 to date of this report. This phenomenon, however, does not reflect a surge in civic consciousness and activism. Instead, it is driven first and foremost by individuals seeking to access the funding that donors allocate for civil society assistance. Since only officially registered CSOs qualify for such funds, CSOs are being established primarily to access them (a predictable response in a society in which rent-seeking behavior is prevalent).[48]

2) *Since the late 2000s, the government has steadily tightened its control over the sector.* That process now appears to be accelerating. The GoJ's increasingly heavy hand is being felt at the macro and micro levels. At the national level, the GoJ is making it more difficult for CSOs to access foreign funding and it is making the laws that affect their operations more restrictive. Meanwhile, at the local level, low- and mid-level government officials have shown themselves increasingly prone to inserting themselves into

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[45] This feature, too, is beginning to change, but only slowly and with regard to a handful of organizations.

[46] The registration process perpetuates this flaw by not requiring CSOs to state clearly a primary mission, but by asking instead that they indicate (by checking the appropriate boxes) the various fields of endeavors in which they are active.

[47] One prominent Amman-based civil society expert and journalist by profession, described media coverage of civil society as "hugely misleading." He noted that outlets that are state-run and/or heavily favorable to the government in their coverage (three television stations, six radio stations, and the two newspapers with the largest circulation) actively disseminate the views of critics of civil society, including unsubstantiated allegations against it. (The state owns 65 percent of *al-Rai*, the newspaper with the largest circulation, and 35 percent of *ad-Dustur*, which has the second-largest circulation.)

[48] Fearing the heightened competition over funding created by the constant influx of new entities into the sector, many civil society activists have urged the government to make entry more difficult (for instance by raising the legally required number of founding members from the current seven to twenty or more). This desire for greater government regulation is ironic, given the complaints otherwise expressed by civil society actors about excessive GoJ interference in the sector.

and trying to micro-manage the work of CBOs. It is not clear that they are doing so in response to directives from above; instead, what seems to be happening is that these officials are going beyond their mandate, and are not being held accountable for overstepping their boundaries. This situation is not new, but it has worsened in the past several years and has created mounting frustration among civil society actors.[49]

3) *The GoJ's rhetoric about the CSS has become increasingly bifurcated and contradictory*. At times, official statements – particularly from the Palace – praise civil society and underscore the critical contributions it makes to addressing the problems confronting the kingdom, from fighting poverty, unemployment and marginality to helping cope with refugees and promoting inclusion and empowerment. This same official discourse often urges partnerships between state agencies, the private sector and CSOs and portrays civil society as a key source of information and feedback for a government bent on consultation and dialogue, and determined to reach out to all key "stakeholders" when designing public policies. Indeed, in his March 9, 2013 Letter of Designation of Abdullah Ensour as Prime Minister (PM), King Abdullah stressed the need to "strengthen cooperation with civil society organizations." At the same time, however, key GoJ figures (including PM Ensour) have repeatedly been critical of civil society, emphasizing its flaws and appearing to dismiss its role in national development. Government officials and many parliamentarians alike routinely refer to NGOs as "corrupt," "incompetent" and/or "useless." These attacks are relayed and amplified by sympathetic media outlets, especially those under government control, which helps the views in question gain widespread acceptance in public opinion. In short, the GoJ appears to talk out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to civil society – praising its merits and the necessity of partnering with it, while at the same time constantly highlighting and bemoaning its flaws. However, since the GoJ is not a monolithic entity, one may simply note that different components of that government articulate very different discourses, indeed frequently contradictory ones, with regard to civil society. While there has always been a degree of "official dissonance" on this subject, the phenomenon has become more noticeable in recent years.

4) *A handful of NGOs active in the DRG area become increasingly visible.*[50] They have earned a degree of public recognition and respect through the quality of their monitoring, lobbying, advocacy and policy-analysis work, and in some cases because of their steady efforts to ensure that Jordan complies with its obligations under the international conventions and treaties it has signed, ratified, or acceded to.

5) *There is a growing recognition amongst CSOs (mostly NGOs but far less by CBOs) of the importance of strategic planning, being mission-driven, consulting with stakeholders, and engaging in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects and activities*. To be sure, that recognition remains far too insufficiently widespread across the CSS; organizations that display it remain the exception, not the rule. Nonetheless, the past five years have seen positive changes in this regard; CSOs used to engage in M&E exclusively to satisfy a donor requirement: a donor-driven M&E process was imposed on largely indifferent and sometimes recalcitrant organizations that generally did not see much value in that process. That is no longer as true today. More CSOs now recognize the need to determine whether or not their activities are having the desired impact and what can be learned from the successes and failures of their projects so that necessary course corrections can take place and the lessons integrated into future planning.

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[49] These processes are unfolding simultaneously, but they do not appear to be connected. They are not manifestations of a single, coherent "GoJ civil society policy" that would be applied consistently from the grassroots up.
[50] For example, the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies (PCEIS), the al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development (HCCSD), the Justice Center for Legal Aid (JCLA), and the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ).

SECTION II: CONTRIBUTIONS

This section summarizes the assessment's findings regarding the nature, scope, strengths and limitation of civil society's contributions to six key objectives: 1) social-sector development; 2) economic growth; 3) improved service delivery; 4) political reform; 5) countering VE; and 6) coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis. Respondents overwhelmingly viewed civil society's contributions as ranging from tangible but uneven and limited overall (service delivery) to extremely limited at best (political reform) to insignificant (countering VE).

Social Sector Development and Economic Growth

Civil society's marginal contributions in social sector development and economic growth primarily reflect its *limited capacities* and the *growing social needs* of the population, which have been compounded by the influx of Syrian refugees. Other contributing variables include *endemic sector fragmentation*, which manifests itself in scattered and uncoordinated efforts to respond to deteriorating social and economic conditions; the *absence of a strategic approach to social and economic challenges* (by the sector at large and by individual CSOs), which precludes consideration of root causes and adequate concentration of resources on them;[51] the *lack of cooperation and coordination between civil society and government*; and the latter's *failure to harness civil society in a meaningful way in order to address social and economic issues*, especially at the local level.[52]

Civil society activists interviewed recognized that their social and economic contributions take the form of disjointed, ad hoc efforts to "cope" with social and economic problems that seem to overwhelm them. They present an image similar to that of firemen with inadequate equipment rushing to extinguish as many fires as possible, and having only limited success doing so, just as more fires continuously break out nearby.[53] Civil society sometimes succeeds in mitigating some of the worst manifestations of social marginality and economic stagnation, but its efforts in this regard are largely on the margin and fall short of even beginning to address root causes.

Improved Service Delivery

Respondents consistently felt that out of the six national objectives above, civil society contributes most to service provision, which remains the primary and often exclusive focus of the vast majority of CSOs in Jordan. Even then, interviewees generally agreed that the sector's performance in this area suffers from several flaws: 1) the *quality of the services offered is often low* and the *range of beneficiaries limited*; 2) Services *do not necessarily match the primary needs of recipients*, in part because CSOs rarely conduct needs assessments; 3) *Civil society actors have failed to prioritize improving accessibility to, and the quality of,*

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[51] RONGOS employ a more strategic approach to addressing social and economic ailments, but they suffer from a lack of transparency and specialization. In addition, several CBO activists working with RONGOs expressed resentment towards the latter, complaining that the benefits of RONGO programming do not sufficiently trickle down to the local level, and that CBOs are not adequately empowered through their collaboration with RONGOs.

[52] Some CSOs were of the opinion that higher national councils can be effective in bridging the gap between the government, civil society and the private sector so as to make possible progress on social and economic challenges. As policy-making bodies that bring together the main stakeholders on selected national issues, these councils provide a platform for civil society representatives to advocate for their respective causes as they interact closely with government officials and leaders of other sectors. In the words of one respondent, "We had been advocating for years to have insurance companies cover family planning, but to no avail, until we had a breakthrough through our representation on the higher council."

[53] To make things worse, the firemen in question have a negative public image and are viewed with suspicion and hostility by the authorities.

the services they provide, or how to *reach out to the most vulnerable populations*. That being said, informants were consistently hard-pressed to point to specific evidence to evaluate the extent of the sector's contributions to service delivery, or to suggest ways in which performance in this area could be enhanced.

Political Reform

The vast majority of informants were of the opinion that *civil society plays a largely insignificant role in facilitating political reform*, particularly if performance in this area is measured in terms of policy change, new legislation, or shifts in political norms or behavior. Several interviewees observed that civil society was largely a by-stander with regard to the two windows for political reform that opened in 1989 and 2011, respectively. It neither helped bring those situations about, nor did it prove able to take advantage of them to advance a liberalization agenda; at least one informant noted that civil society "wasted" those two opportunities.

Views regarding some of the better-known national-level DRG organizations were mixed. On the one hand, civil society experts generally noted that these organizations have become more professional and competent; that they have learned to adapt to the restrictive legal and political environment in which they operate; that they have managed to bring public attention to sensitive political issues; and that they perform useful watchdog functions, including documenting human rights (HR) violations and engaging in election and parliamentary monitoring. On the other hand, there was also a recognition that the monitoring, lobbying, and policy analysis that these organizations conduct, valuable as they are, lack broader impact on the polity and society, and that the issues on which these NGOs work have a low grassroots-mobilization potential.

Respondents generally viewed civil society's inability to advance a reform agenda as reflecting its own flaws and the political environment in which it operates. With regard to the former, there was general agreement that CSOs active in the DRG area lack broad issue-based constituencies, and that as long as they cannot rally a large enough swath of the Jordanian public, they will remain unable to effect concrete legislative and policy change. As for the contextual factors impeding those CSOs' ability to advance reform, there was widespread recognition that security concerns over events in the region have relegated political reform to the sidelines and that public demand for reform is currently low. The authorities' generally successful efforts to take advantage of that situation to constrict further political space, legal restrictions on CSO activity, and the government's heavy-handed approach to civil society and interference in its internal affairs were all viewed as important factors behind the sector's inability to contribute to substantive political change.

Countering VE

CSOs have played a very modest role in addressing the root causes and the manifestations of extremist thought and behavior and in promoting tolerance in society thus far. The government has not made a concerted effort to harness civil society to tackle the challenge of VE. Two of the senior government officials who were interviewed took a dismissive view of civil society' potential contributions to fight VE, casting it as a "prerogative" of the government, and suggesting that it is not a responsibility that can be shared with civil society actors. Another government official said that the government is starting to ask certain CSOs to hold public events to raise awareness amongst youth of the risks of extremism.

In sharp contrast, a civil society expert viewed civil society's absence from the CVE field as one of its greatest failures, with serious long-term ramifications for the kingdom. She insisted that there is much more civil society could be called upon to do to address what are widely recognized to be sources of extremist thinking in society - from school curricula and the manner in which teachers perform their

roles to the prevalence of rigid social norms and values that feed into intolerance and violent behavior. She stated that while civil society can boast real achievements in providing services and direct humanitarian aid, it is "totally failing" when it comes to addressing issues of social exclusion and identity; countering the pull of VE narratives; creating social venues and events that can appeal to at-risk youth; and helping integrate Syrian refugees in society "so that an entire generation does not grow up feeling stigmatized and denied political and economic opportunities, creating the real possibility that tens if not hundreds of thousands could be radicalized and drift into VE." She summed up her views by pointing to a grave disconnect between, on the one hand, the issues on which civil society in Jordan tends to focus, its approach and its activities, and on the other hand, the existential challenges, including the inter-related ones of extremist thinking and violence, that will determine the kingdom's future, and for which civil society has abdicated a role.

The GoJ has made only limited efforts to use civil society actors to counter the potential appeal of VE thinking among youth. One of the very few CSOs active in this area, Friends of National Security, works closely with the authorities. It relies on religious leaders from *Dar al-Ifta'* to engage youth in discussing Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) material, highlighting that organization's distortions of Islamic concepts to justify violence.[54] By and large, however, the GoJ's disjointed efforts to "wage the war of ideas" against VE lack in strategic thinking, and rely on the religious establishment far more heavily that they do on civil society actors. This favoring of state-sponsored religious institutions at the expense of CSOs may reflect consideration of their respective degrees of legitimacy and credibility with the population at large (the regime likely does not trust civil society to be able to "carry its own weight" in the fight against VE thought). It is also consistent with the contrast between, on the one hand, the close relationship that exists between the regime and "official Islam," and, on the other hand, the mixture of mutual distrust and hostility that tends to characterize state-civil society interaction.

A few CSOs have recognized the increasing donor interest in CVE and are gearing-up for activities that they will position as CVE. However, this sudden interest does not appear to indicate CSOs' recognition of the gravity of the VE problem Jordan faces, or their ability to come up with thoughtful and innovative programming likely to resonate with at-risk youth. Instead, interviewees suggested that it reflects an attempt to tap into the new sources of funding that will be earmarked for CVE purposes. Donors should be mindful of that situation and ensure that projects presented as CVE reflect a true understanding of the variables and dynamics that sustain the VE risk in Jordan; that they are squarely focused on addressing those factors; and that they propose to do so through practical and thoughtful programming.

Coping with the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Civil society has made modest and scattered contributions to helping the country cope with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of Syrian refugees. Its performance in this area can be understood only within the context of a donor-led response to the crisis that has lacked strategic focus and has been marred by duplication of efforts, lack of coordination, and finger-pointing among the various stakeholders (donors, foreign relief agencies, and Jordanian CSOs). Most interviewees felt that the impact of programming has not been commensurate with the amount of resources deployed, and

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[54] Dar al-Ifta', the Department for Issuing Fatwas, is headed by the Grand Mufti of Jordan. In place since the time of Abdullah I, it is the highest religious institution in the country. The other key institutional component of official Islam in Jordan is the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, which King Hussein established in 1980. The Institute was instrumental in the organization of a series of high-profile conferences that brought world-renowned Islamic scholars to Amman, a process that culminated in the Amman Message in 2004.

they consistently decried worsening conditions in urban host communities. There was a clear sense among them that the scope of the crisis had overwhelmed civil society's limited capacities.

The lack of communication and coordination among CSOs on the ground (which was blamed, in part, on the absence of a coordinated donor response) was viewed as a major problem, preventing local organizations from supporting crisis-stricken communities in complementary ways, in accordance with their respective strengths and areas of specialization. Respondents underscored that civil society's response to the crisis has been project- and often even activity-centered. They highlighted the ad hoc, reactive nature of the work undertaken and the small scale, short-term 'Band-Aid' approach to programming.

Civil society has taken few initiatives of its own to cope with the influx of Syrian refugees and its impact on host communities. It has not behaved as an autonomous actor with its own approach to the problem. Instead, it has operated largely as a sub-contractor for international organizations that have set the pace of operations on the ground. Even then, the relationship between CSOs and international organizations has been highly problematic, with the former feeling that the latter have taken advantage of them and have not tried to help build up their capacities. As one interviewee describes the relationship with foreign relief agencies, "they give us 10 percent of the budget and we end up doing 90 percent of the project; these are not true partnerships." Many interviewees stressed the importance of reworking the terms of engagement between foreign relief agencies and local organizations in order to ensure that capacity enhancement of local CSOs is a performance indicator for which international organizations are held accountable. Local CSOs want their relationship with foreign implementers to become true partnerships that will help them develop their own capacity to implement projects.

> "The foreign relief agencies give us 10 percent of the budget and we end up doing 90 percent of the project; these are not true partnerships."
>
> *CSO speaking of foreign relief agencies*

At the same time, several respondents pointed to donors' relatively low expectations from and lax reporting requirements for CSOs supported within the context of their response to the Syrian refugee crisis. While donors require that international NGOs have a proven track record of relevant past experience and achievements, they do not hold local partners to high standards. The result, according to many respondents, has been that many newly established local organizations with little experience working with refugees have been able to secure funding and work on projects despite their lack of capacity and relevant expertise.

In retrospect, the Syrian refugee crisis represented an opportunity and a challenge for civil society. The opportunity was largely missed because the magnitude of the challenge far exceeded civil society's limited capacities. The opportunity was for the sector to demonstrate to the authorities and the public its relevance and importance by helping the country tackle the greatest humanitarian emergency with which it has been faced in recent history. The crisis did raise the profile of a few local organizations that truly contributed to alleviating the problems created by the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees; overall, however, civil society's response has fallen far short of what would have been needed to help the sector improve its generally negative image with the public and the authorities. The contrast between the sheer scope of the human tragedy and the sector's limited capacity has been a key factor in civil society's perceived unsatisfactory performance in tackling the refugee crisis. In its response, the sector was hobbled by severe structural problems. While some of these problems can be blamed on the scattered efforts of donors and the disjointed and unstable aid provided by foreign relief agencies, many others betray civil society's widely recognized and chronic flaws.

Driven by a constant quest for funding and the sheer magnitude of the humanitarian situation in Jordan many CSOs have altered their programming to address the Syrian crisis. This new direction does not necessarily match their strengths, and has frequently served to the detriment of their own stated mission. CSOs have begun to incorporate work with refugees into their programming, or to position existing programs as refugee-focused partly to secure funds as they continue to pursue other endeavors. As one interviewee states, "donors limit the geographic focus of our activities, but at least we can work on the priority areas we have identified for ourselves. All we need to do is ensure that part of the programming benefits Syrians." One problem with this approach is that what is described as refugee-centered work often is nothing of the sort. In the end, everyone may lose: donors (whose funding is diverted toward endeavors it is not meant to support); refugees (who are not the primary focus of local organizations claiming to be dedicated to their needs); and CSOs (which stray away from their stated mission to pursue endeavors for which their capacities are not a good match).

Women's Organization

"Women's organizations" are defined here as CSOs that focus on meeting the needs and aspirations of women, address gender issues, and are led and staffed by women. Those organizations fall into one or both of the following two categories:

1) *Rights-driven CSOs*, which include organizations that advocate for addressing gender inequities or violations of women's rights in national legislation; those that strive for the political empowerment of women (including increasing the number of women in decision-making roles in politics and government); those that monitor the implementation of laws and provisions that aim to guarantee the rights of women; and those that seek to ensure that Jordan lives up to the specific commitments to women's rights it has made under the international agreements and conventions it has signed and/or that strive to eliminate GoJ reservations on other international agreements and conventions related to women's rights.

2) CSOs that *provide services* to women and/or seek to contribute to their economic empowerment. This second category comprises the vast majority of women's organizations in Jordan. Most services are in the area of human security, which encompasses education,[55] health, food security, and the provision of shelter and housing.[56] Others relate to social protection (which includes combating violence against women and issues related to elderly women and women with special needs). Legal counseling (in general) and legal support services (during court cases) also represent the primary or exclusive focus of a significant number of women's groups, and some of the most successful women's groups in Jordan work in this area.

Interviews pointed to three main structural problems facing women's organizations and constricting their ability to contribute to the six national objectives. These problems generally mirror those from which Jordanian civil society suffers at large, but they are even more pronounced and have even more damaging consequences for women's groups.

1) The first issue has to do with *internal governance, which remains undemocratic, opaque, and 'personalistic'*. Most women's groups are still personality-driven. Historically, single individuals have had a grip on the most prominent national organizations and have done little to allow younger leaders to grow

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[55] A large percentage of women's organizations in Jordan concentrate on offering literacy classes for girls and women. Many others provide vocational training including sewing, embroidery, and home-based food processing.
[56] A 2008 study estimated that about three quarters of all women CSOs were in the human security domain, with education by far the most common area of service provision. See "Women and Gender Programming in Jordan: A Map of NGO Work," p. 13.

into decision-making roles. Rank-and-file members often feel that the leadership is not accountable and cannot be changed.

2) A related problem is the *intense fragmentation of the field and the debilitating competition that pits women's organizations against each other*. Lack of communication and coordination betrays and perpetuates the absence of a unifying vision on how to enhance the status and influence of women in Jordan. Particularly with regard to rights-based organizations, infighting often reflects petty personal rivalries and clashes of ambitions at the leadership level. Organizational behavior typically reflects personal relationships and considerations far more than the desire to promote a shared agenda. For instance, MPs known to champion women's causes stated that the little support they received from women's organizations stemmed from personal relationships, not their position on women's issues. One of them observed that neither of the two main women's organizations in the kingdom, the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) and the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU), had approached her or supported her bid for reelection, despite her record working to advance women's rights.

3) Perhaps the most consequential structural problem faced by women's organizations is a lack of broad constituencies behind them. Most women do not recognize themselves in these organizations, the language they use, the causes they promote, how they go about promoting them, and the programming in which they engage. This problem is particularly acute with regard to rights-based organizations. As one experienced female interviewee noted, "they [rights-based women's organizations] cannot get women to stand with them and work on issues…They are looking at women's empowerment from a western perspective…they keep pushing programs on women to turn them into [western-style] activists." Another interviewee, who unfortunately did not seem to have drawn the right lessons from the difficulties that her organization had encountered while working "with" women, noted with exasperation that "all women are against us [civil society activists]. Women need to be reeducated." That single remark betrayed the cultural chasm that separates elitist rights-based women's organizations from ordinary women on the ground, and revealed their dismissive attitude (and a mixture of resentment and contempt) toward those women who are supposed to constitute their base. Until the women's rights movement's discourse and approach align far more than they currently do with Jordanian realities, and reflect the kind and pace of progress that that context makes possible, that movement will continue to struggle to gain traction and make headway toward altering prevailing social attitudes and norms. Indeed, the vast majority of interviewees viewed women's rights-based groups as ineffective; one noted, "[they] have plateaued in their ability to advance a women's rights agenda."

While the above problems are particularly visible with regard to rights-based groups, they can be detected as well in many women's organizations focused on service delivery. Here again, the root cause of inadequate performance often lies in the gap that separates organizations from their supposed constituencies, and the services that these organizations provide from the services most desired by those constituencies. As one interviewee noted, many organizations "don't know what women actually want" (because they do not bother to try to find out, for instance by conducting needs assessments), and they do not pause to ask themselves whether the services they provide for women are those that women really want. That same interviewee continued, "there is often a big difference between what women want and what we think they want…we don't understand why women often seem unwilling or unprepared to assume the roles that we advocate for them." She argued that women's organizations (rights groups and others alike) have set the bar too high – that they have been excessively ambitious with regard to their objectives. She recommends that women's organizations should instead begin with a clear understanding of the upper limit of what the community

> **"There is often a big difference between what women want and what we think they want…we don't understand why women often seem unwilling or unprepared to assume the roles that we advocate for them."**
>
> *Interviewee speaking of Women's Organizations*

can accept by way of enhanced social roles for women, and that they proceed from there by focusing on what is achievable, and doing so through incremental steps.

Finally, even more so than other rights-based NGOs, NGOs that seek to advance women's rights find it extremely difficult to raise or gain traction on issues that are not explicitly endorsed by the Palace, and/or are considered to be too sensitive by a government mindful of the need not to offend its traditionalist and tribal base.

SECTION III: DONOR ENGAGEMENT

This section outlines key features of donors' engagement with Jordanian civil society and highlights related lessons, some of which are fleshed out in the document's conclusion. Inevitably, some findings overlap with the discussion of "civil society's perception of donor engagement" in Section IV below. Because efforts were made to keep that overlap to a minimum, the reader should bear in mind that Section IV will add to the observations below.

Finding 1. There was widespread agreement among interviewees that donors have *lacked a strategic approach to supporting the sector* and that their programming has been *overwhelmingly project- or activity-centered as opposed to outcome-driven.* Civil society analysts were particularly critical of what they viewed as donors' emphasis on merely "moving money out the door" – doling out grants and technical assistance with *little thought given to impact or a real vision of what success in funding the sector might look like*. Individual donors, and even more so the donor community as a whole, have failed to articulate and abide by a set of clear long-term objectives to guide their support for civil society.

In focusing on the provision of grants to an increasingly growing number of organizations based on their presumed capacity to undertake particular projects or activities (as suggested by their grant-writing skills), donors have avoided a potentially more productive approach: identifying certain organizations with the most potential to contribute to progress toward clearly defined outcomes, and throwing their support behind those organizations. The unwillingness of the donor community at large to make sustained, long-term investments in developing the capacity of a select group of CSOs has been felt particularly with regard to advocacy. There is a paucity of CSOs capable of engaging in meaningful data collection and analysis, and of conducting policy-relevant, substantive research. This situation has undermined the sector's potential utility to decision-makers, thereby diminishing any readiness the government might have had to engage with civil society. Overall, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that in general ad hoc grant giving and technical assistance has yielded a modest harvest. After three decades of substantial donor funding for civil society in the kingdom one is hard pressed to find evidence of impact that is commensurate with the considerable resources that have been deployed.

Finding 2. For the most part, assistance has taken the form of *duplicative, off-the-shelf, repetitious and unimaginative training and other "capacity-building" activities that have emphasized form and process over substance and outcome*. Those able to receive funding because they have mastered the skills associated with the application process are not necessarily those best positioned to make a difference, let alone those who have real constituencies behind them. Variations on two sentiments the team heard repeatedly during the fieldwork betray the cynicism with which many Jordanians view how donors have approached strengthening civil society in the kingdom: "half of the population [of Jordan] has been trained by donors, and the other half consists of trainers" and "it is always the same twenty persons in the room attending a capacity-building workshop in a five-star hotel."[57]

Finding 3. *Donors have paid insufficient attention to the serious governance issues that continue to plague the sector, despite years of generous donor funding for "capacity building*." During interviews, civil society experts and activists alike frequently commented on the disconnect between donors' readiness to fund all sort of projects, including many known to have little impact at best, and these same donors' relative neglect of the blatant governance deficits that remain at the heart of civil society's poor performance. Among those deficits discussed earlier, the following ones stand out: the insignificant role of boards or general assemblies; the lack of accountability of the leadership to rank-and-file members, let alone to alleged constituencies; the outsized role that personal relationships and family-based ties play in the formation

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[57] Section IV discusses in greater detail donors' problematic approach to capacity building.

and operations of many CSOs; and CSOs' continued lack of skills in project management, financial management, managing staff and volunteers, fundraising, communications with the public and the media, and M&E techniques.

Finding 4. There was universal agreement that *the geostrategic priorities of donors in Jordan are the single most important variable shaping how they approach support for civil society in the kingdom*. That dynamic was viewed as largely responsible for the relative lack of consideration that donors have given to the impact of their assistance to the sector, and their readiness instead to "continue to fund mediocrity," as one civil society expert put it. Donors' priorities are related to regional instability, counterterrorism, and Israel, and the chaos and violence in the region have made them even more unwilling than before to run the risk of alienating an important ally. Their foremost concern remains the stability of, and continued good relations with, the Hashemite regime, and their civil society programming must be examined through that lens.

Finding 5. *One of the most adverse effects of donor programming has been to strengthen upward accountability to donors at the expense of downward accountability to would-be constituents*. Gaining access to donor funding and satisfying donors' reporting requirements is a truly existential issue for CSOs: their continued ability to operate depends on it. Because donors have refrained from making their support conditional upon tangible evidence by CSOs that they represent the needs and aspirations of issue-based constituencies or particular communities, dependence on donors has dis-incentivized accountability to those constituencies and communities and failed to nurture the perception among CSOs that they have an obligation to communicate with constituents and report to them on a meaningful and regular basis. CSOs' feeling that they need to sustain "upward credibility" (to donors) to the detriment of downward credibility (to constituents) also has been a leading cause of the negative public image of the sector, which is tainted by the widespread perception of it as an appendage of Western institutions and governments, not as an indigenous actor that speaks to the needs of the population.

The dynamics summarized above have fed on each other and have become self-perpetuating: CSOs' reliance on donors has undermined their domestic legitimacy but allowed them to survive, and in some cases even thrive, despite their lack of a broad social base of support. The weakness of that support in turn has provided yet more incentives for CSOs to see themselves as accountable to donors, not to the public. This situation, unhealthy in itself, has also damaged prospects for productive civil society/government engagement for three reasons: 1) government officials typically feel that CSOs devoid of grassroots support have little to offer them, whether by way of rallying public support for policies or to facilitate their implementation; 2) the close relationship between donors and CSOs feeds into some officials' views of the sector as alien, disloyal, and a carrier of foreign values and agendas;[58] and 3) the GoJ feels that it, not CSOs, should be receiving the bulk of the donor funding directed at the sector, and that CSOs are usurping the government's role as the legitimate recipient of foreign assistance. The sector's upward accountability to donors thus undermines prospects for fruitful GoJ/civil society interaction by reducing the incentive for each side to reach out to the other. Meanwhile, the sector's inability to engage with the government undermines even further its perceived relevance in the eyes of the public at large. By chipping away at the credibility of the sector and sustaining its disinclination to focus on constituency building, the lack of downward accountability that donor dependency has helped perpetuate has prevented the sector from becoming a true change and development agent.

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[58] As noted earlier, even when such views are not genuinely held, they can be used to discredit civil society.

SECTION IV: PERCEPTIONS

This section summarizes findings regarding five sets of perspectives that relate to Jordanian civil society: 1) How civil society activists themselves view the sector; 2) The general public's perceptions of it; 3) How civil society and the GoJ view each other; and 4) Civil society's perceptions of donor engagement; and 5) The GoJ's perceptions of donor engagement with civil society.

Civil Society in its Own Eyes

Finding 1. *Many civil society activists (especially CBO members) have at best a superficial understanding of both the concept of civil society and the realities of the sector in Jordan*. They are hard-pressed to move beyond vague statements when asked to articulate their conception of civil society's mission, to reflect on their own role as civically engaged individuals, or to explain how their organization relates to the sector's other moving parts. Most of them seem poorly informed about what other CSOs in the same fields are doing, and are unable to point to the sector's main achievements and success stories. Few civil society activists appear to have given much thought to what might be needed to take the sector to the next level. They display little detailed knowledge of the state of affairs in the sector as a whole.

Finding 2. Most civil society activists interviewed shared two main views: that civil society's role is to "fill the gaps" left by the government's action, especially in the area of service-delivery; and that, as it currently exists in Jordan, civil society is mostly a business – the vast majority of those active in it are not publicly- minded individuals eager to invest time and energy into creating a better society and polity, but, as one respondent put it, "professionals looking for work." Ironically, interviewees nonetheless tended to describe civil society as the "voice of the community" (even as many of their other comments often made it clear that few CSOs are connected in any meaningful way to the constituencies they claim to represent). In sharp contrast to the prevailing view among them of civil society as a "gap-filler," few activists seemed to think of the sector as a change agent; even fewer discussed its actual or potential contributions to such areas as overseeing government, providing a counterweight to it, or policy-making.

Finding 3. *Civil society actors are strikingly cognizant of, and willing to acknowledge publicly, the ailments that afflict the sector*. Throughout the interview process, they consistently bemoaned civil society' donor-driven nature; the lack of specialization, coordination, and cooperation among CSOs; the prevalence of opportunistic behavior and the debilitating infighting and rivalries within the sector; and the disproportionate influence of Amman-based organizations which, as one interviewee put it, "take up all the funding and only come to us when donors mandate it." At the same time, interviews suggested *a sense of resignation* to the situation summarized above. Civil society activists simply did not seem to feel that it was within their power to change a state of affairs that reflects powerful cultural, political and economic forces, including government hostility to a genuinely autonomous and vibrant civil society; a domestic and regional environment that is unfavorable to civil society development; the persistence of a "tribal culture" that influences cooperation among organizations;[59] widespread poverty, which constitutes a powerful impediment to civic action; and a private sector that shows no inclination to support civil society, except its RONGO wing.[60]

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[59] CBOs seemed as aware of the necessity of forging coalitions to gain traction on issues as they were reluctant to work with one another in practice. While interviews revealed a clear understanding of the benefits of cooperation in the abstract, they also highlighted the strong skepticism that such cooperation was likely to materialize given the realities of the sector in Jordan.
[60] Any analysis of the dynamics of civil society activism in Jordan has to take tribalism into consideration. The strength of tribal consciousness and tribal linkages affects cooperation and coalescence of civic groups, and undermines expressions of civic nationalism that are important for civic action.

Throughout the team's interviews, civil society activists also repeatedly complained about the lack of a spirit of volunteerism and public service amongst youth. That is a particularly acute problem for a sector that relies primarily on volunteers, rather than permanent staff, and which in order to succeed needs youth who want to make a difference in public life and feel they can do so (youth who, to paraphrase, ask not what their country can do for them, but what they can do for their country). Such youth are in scarce supply, and according to civil society activists donors have not helped. The head of a prominent DRG NGO observed that donor funding has played an important part in extinguishing among many youth whatever impulse might have existed to engage in public endeavor for the sake of it, not as a means of earning a living. As he bitterly noted, "everyone [active in the sector] has a rate now, even young people with little experience."

Public Perceptions of Civil Society

Finding 1. *Jordanian citizens have at best a shallow understanding of what civil society is, and the functions it is supposed to perform. They also exhibit scant knowledge of the realities of the sector in the kingdom*. The vast majority of respondents could not name specific CSOs except for a few RONGOs. Women who participated in a FGD in Tafileh were unable to point to a single CBO in their community, though they mentioned a few RONGOs and one Amman-based NGO. In general, when asked to discuss the functions civil society perform, interviewees offered at best very generic statements about "raising awareness" or providing the population with soft skills; they could not evaluate with any specificity civil society's contributions to the six national objectives discussed earlier.

Even respondents with a more pronounced background of activism in the sector were unable to speak to the concept of civil society or its specific expressions in the Jordanian context. For instance, an FGD with participants in the NDI-implemented *Ana Usharek* program who were all second-year university students (except for one male student doing graduate work) could not describe the role that civil society plays in a democratic context, nor could they describe Jordanian CSOs' contributions to national objectives. When asked to talk about specific CSOs in the kingdom, they could name only international NGOs and two RONGOs. When discussing their participation in the *Ana Usharek* program, they mentioned learning about "empowerment, dialogue, tolerance and the acceptance of the other" – but shortly thereafter one male student asked the other participants whether they were aware that "75 percent of Christians in Jordan know that Islam is the true religion but they cannot convert." Strikingly, no one in the group challenged that comment.

Finding 2. *Jordanian citizens believe that civil society's impact is extremely limited, especially with regard to effecting public policy*. Focus group participants were of the opinion that key governmental decisions are made with little input from the public at large, including civil society. They felt that when civil society's input is sought, it is mostly pro forma, to provide a degree of legitimation for decisions that already have been made behind closed doors, and to suggest to donors that decision-making involved consultations with the sector. Respondents felt that the performance of civil society in the area of service delivery ranged widely, with RONGOs accounting for the vast majority of successes, but that overall it was inadequate to address the current challenges.

Finding 3. *While they do not know much about civil society, citizens generally have a negative view of it*. By and large, they buy into the narrative of it as donor-driven, ripe with corruption and infighting, and driven by opportunistic, self-interested behavior. Interviews confirmed that opinions about RONGOs are generally more positive, particularly with regard to professionalism and impact.

Finding 4. *Jordanians feel that the government should closely monitor the activities of CSOs and maintain tight control over them*. This finding points to pervasive suspicion of, or skepticism toward, the sector, and may reflect the views summarized under findings 2 and 3 above. For some respondents, it also seemed to be

tied to the perception of civil society as a Trojan horse for western values and agendas. It is striking that Jordanians who generally feel resentment and weariness toward a government they often criticize for being "too controlling" should feel that that same government should maintain a close watch on civil society activity.

Civil Society and the GoJ: Mutual Perceptions

How Civil Society Views Government

Finding 1. *Civil society regards the government as generally unsupportive of its role and unwilling to engage in a true partnership with it.* Its view of government attitude toward it can be summarized as a "grudging tolerance": the government reluctantly accepts civil society because it feels it has to (including in order to sustain its international image and to please donors), but it keeps a tight grip on the sector and carefully circumscribes its activities. Civil society activists consistently complained that the government does not recognize the sector's value and contributions, and that it has been unwilling to institutionalize cooperation with it. One activist observed, "we have not reached the point where government invites us to identify needs in the community and divides roles [between government agencies and civil society] as to who does what." Another interviewee summarized his opinion on the question as follows: "The government does not care. It is very apathetic toward civil society. They [government officials] tolerate us. They are neither supportive nor a huge problem as long as we don't get in their way…The government is not able to understand the potential of civil society and forge with it a win-win relationship."

With regard to advocacy specifically, civil society respondents emphasized four points. First, they stated that on draft laws and policies the government consults with CSOs only on an ad hoc, occasional basis, that feedback is not always taken into account, and that there often is a pro forma, superficial aspect to those consultations. Second, and in contrast, they expressed a belief that participation on higher national councils is proving to be of some benefit for civil society – specifically, that it facilitates communication between it, the government and the private sector, and that it increases the likelihood that the sector's input will be reflected in governmental decisions. Third, they were in agreement that it is much easier for civil society to influence government decisions on issues that are already on the government's radar rather than on those that are not. Drawing the authorities' attention to questions on which they are not already focusing has proven to be a challenge for civil society, and one for which it has not met much success. Fourth, they noted that their ability to impact government decisions and policies is much higher if they do not limit themselves to advocating changes in laws, policies, or practices, but if they also put forward concrete alternatives to the latter, and back up their suggestions with relevant research.[61]

Civil society activists consistently described the process that gives the government control over CSOs' ability to access foreign funding as the clearest evidence of the government's efforts to impede the sector and interfere with its activities. They noted that, upon receiving approval requests, the prime ministry forwards them to MoPIC, which in turn refers them to special review committees in designated ministries, but without specifying a timeline for approving or denying the request. Many CSOs complained that that process results in recurrent losses of funding opportunities, since donors will not wait indefinitely for CSOs to secure the necessary approvals. One activist observed that a CSO may need to submit a separate application for each component of a given project, or for every governorate or community in which that project will carry-out activities, and that different committees in several

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[61] One interviewee recounted her organization's efforts to lobby the Ministry of Education (MoE) so that harmful food items would be removed from school canteens. She noted that initially the ministry was not very receptive to those efforts because it was not presented with alternatives. That position changed, however, after the interviewee's CSO launched a project that provided for the preparation and delivery of meals for school canteens.

ministries will then review these various applications. To bypass that cumbersome and lengthy process, she observed, many CSOs instead look for foreign organizations to collaborate with since "foreign partners deal directly with donors and do not have to go through MoPIC." She added, "The idea was to have MoPIC coordinate foreign aid. That mechanism is not working. MoPIC is stretched too thin and designated committees don't understand our priorities or the services we offer." Like other respondents, she suggested that civil society representatives should have a seat on funding approval committees to facilitate understanding within those committees of the projects for which approval is sought.

Finding 2. *Civil society views government as bent on controlling or co-opting the sector, not on helping it grow.* Criticism of the government as being "obsessed with control" was a recurrent theme among civil society activists interviewed. Another frequent claim was that the authorities are using the turmoil in the region as a pretext to clamp down further on the sector. In addition, several respondents denounced what they viewed as government efforts to keep the sector weak by carefully avoiding the addressing of the sources of fragmentation within it – indeed, sometimes, by deliberately encouraging a scattering of resources and energy. Examples raised by interviewees to support that claim included the establishment of two new institutions at the prime ministry: the Women's Committee, the mandate of which, according to them, overlaps with that of the JNCW, and the Human Rights Unit, the mission of which largely duplicates that of the National Center for Human Rights.

Finding 3. *Civil society's negative attitude toward the government is shaped in part by its belief that government officials are too eager to paint it in a bad light, including to score points with public opinion.* Civil society activists complained that the government always depicts the sector as corrupt, alien, and ineffective. They also bemoaned the heavy toll that this practice exacts on the public's perception of the sector. The resentment at being demonized in public by officials feeds into the sector's negative views of government.

How Government Views Civil Society

Finding 1. *Interviews revealed that many senior government officials have a skin-deep understanding of what civil society actually represents, the functions it performs, and what it could contribute to Jordan's development.* Some officials did display a good grasp of these issues. However, the shallow nature of many of their colleagues' comments was striking. Some government interviewees could not identify where the government stops and civil society begins. Others included under "civil society" and "civil society activity" organizations and behavior that have nothing to do with either. Even after repeated efforts were made to clarify how these concepts generally are understood, it often seemed that interviewees could not get their minds around the space (between the state and citizens) that civil society occupies, why civil society even matters at all, and why it "does things" that the state often is not well-positioned to undertake.

In the course of interviews, two government respondents appeared to simply utter the words and opinions that they felt the consultant in front of them wanted to hear. They would string together a few buzzwords about civil society and express an appreciation for its role. They affirmed the GoJ's efforts to engage with it, support it, and develop a "partnership with it," sometimes asserting their own credentials in this area. The more they made generic statements to that effect, the more difficult it became to detect sincerity or conviction behind them. It was hard to avoid the impression that someone in the room was going through a well-rehearsed script, practiced many times before.

Finding 2. *While there is no single GoJ perspective on civil society, interviews underscored the generally negative view of the sector that prevails in government circles.* As the GoJ does not constitute a monolithic entity, but instead represents a coalition of different interests and outlooks, one usually finds in it a range of viewpoints on the issues that confront the country. Official attitudes toward civil society reflect

that situation: different institutions within the GoJ, and even more so different individuals within them, have different perceptions of and opinions on civil society. That being said, what came out of the interviews was not the diversity of viewpoints, but the dominance of negative assessments of civil society. The real difference in perspectives among officials typically did not reside in whether the latter's views of civil society tended to be more positive or more negative, but how negative – how dismissive and/or suspicious of civil society - they were, and whether opinions were backed-up with any substantive knowledge of the sector or seemed to betray reflexive hostility. Two of the most frequent charges leveled by government officials against civil society were that it is rife with corruption and that it has no impact (see below). During a lengthy interview, one senior Amman-based official kept referring to CSO leaders using funds for personal gain, observing that "some of them are getting wealthy" – all the time adding the qualifier that "that is not true of all CSOs" (but making it clear to the interviewer that he felt it was the case for most of them). That same official repeatedly divided CSOs between "honest" and "dishonest" ones, noting that the media has "done a good job" exposing "dishonest CSOs."

Finding 3. *Government officials tend to be dismissive of both civil society itself and its contributions.* They are dismissive, first, of the *motivations* of civil society activists. Interviews showed them prone to describe the sector as "an industry" and to argue that CSOs typically are established for personal advantage such as financial gain and social prestige, and not in order to contribute to the well-being of the community. One senior government official described CSOs as "fund-chasing institutions" before correcting himself and observing that "institutions" is "too big a word" and that [most] CSOs really are "family businesses" or "personal projects." Officials also are usually highly critical of the *approach and operations* of CSOs. They believe, as one respondent put it, that the sector "is all about training and workshops;" that it does not address concrete needs; that it is more concerned with process than with substance and outcome; and that its activities are often duplicative. They bemoan the fragmentation that prevails in the sector and view its expansion – particularly as reflected in the spectacular increase in the number of CSOs – as a largely artificial phenomenon that betrays the abundance of donor funding and a "weak Societies law," as one government informant put it. Reflecting the views of many of his colleagues, that same interviewee insisted that excessive and insufficiently regulated donor funding to the sector, combined with a regulatory framework that creates insufficient barriers to entry, have created within civil society a "chaos" that must be addressed. Like several of his colleagues, he expressed the need for a database that would house information about all CSOs' current and past projects and funding sources. He described such a database as a means of improving transparency about operations within the sector and observed that it would help address the "double dipping" that he viewed as pervasive in it.

Some government respondents contended that civil society activists *deliberately inflate social problems* in order to secure funding for projects that do not address the actual needs of society. During interviews, suggestions were made to the effect that civil society activists are *more preoccupied with promoting the agendas of donors than to engage in activities that reflect local priorities*, while not explicitly stated, were often not far from the surface. One official asked, "Why are CSOs working on Article 308 of the Penal Code? That article was added to address a specific situation whose solution is acceptable to the majority of Jordanians."

Most importantly perhaps, officials are dismissive of civil society's impact. One referred to the sector's "meager contributions at best" and another observed that "CSOs are still on the receiving end of development assistance" (i.e., beneficiaries of it, not development agents). The vast majority of government respondents shared those views, and when asked to evaluate civil society's contribution to the six national objectives discussed earlier, they consistently gave the sector low ratings – even on service delivery, where they nonetheless viewed civil society as more effective than in other areas. They were dismissive as well of the quality of the research produced by civil society, which one government respondent described as "unreliable" and often-featuring "inaccurate statistics."

Finding 4. *Government officials are willing to acknowledge civil society a limited part in providing social services and furthering development objectives, but they do not recognize a legitimate role for it in such areas as oversight and policy-making.* They insist that setting the country's developmental priorities is the government's prerogative, and that civil society's part should be circumscribed accordingly: CSOs should seek to complement the action of the authorities, and coordinate closely with them. One senior Amman-based official noted that civil society has an important role to play in "preparing society for national initiatives" (those launched by the government). In general, officials believed that civil society's role should be limited to engaging with the government to create jobs, provide services and alleviate poverty. They viewed civil society's role through this limited and purely developmental lens, and implicitly or explicitly deny it a legitimate, substantive part in policy, oversight, and advocacy.

Government respondents were noticeably circumspect and occasionally defensive when prompted to discuss what civil society's contributions to political reform are, or should be. They tended to describe CSOs' appropriate role in this area as promoting "political awareness," not political mobilization or participation. While "promoting political awareness" was not usually defined clearly, the expression seemed to suggest the furthering of civic engagement (under the aegis of the state) and a better understanding by citizens of their responsibilities toward their respective communities and the country as a whole. Respondents stayed clear from any suggestion that CSOs should seek to nurture political will for reform; address politically sensitive issues (e.g., corruption - a topic they only discussed as a problem within civil society); or push for democratic change more generally. They also played down the efficacy of even the more successful DRG organizations, suggesting they are activity- not outcome-driven and that they do not enjoy recognition and support in the population at large. In the words of one respondent, "organizations such as the Al-Hayat Center target only decision-makers. They do not work at the grassroots level to spread political awareness. Their impact is minimal."

During interviews, government officials often used the mantra of civil society being "the government's partner," it was clear that, in their eyes, the "partnership" in question relegates civil society to a largely subservient role – anywhere from "partner in name only" to "very junior partner that should take its cue from the senior one, and be careful not to overstep the limited space it is granted."

"The situation with Syrians necessitates that we be careful and that we put restrictions on the sector. We need to rectify a chaotic situation; our motives [for seeking to tighten oversight of civil-society activity] are not political [but security-related]."

Government interviewee speaking of the Civil Society Sector

Finding 5. *Many government officials view civil society not only as largely ineffective, but also as a potential source of danger, and they consequently believe it must be tightly monitored and controlled.* The threat that government officials suggest civil society poses is of two types. First, two informants specifically voiced disquiet at the "tarnishing of the state's reputation" which, they argued, can result from activities or statements by civil society activists (one of them pointed to CSOs' efforts to change Article 308 of the Penal Code as an illustration of that claim). Second, and more importantly, government officials consistently pointed to the security implications of the staggering and largely unchecked expansion of the sector, and of the "chaos" and lack of transparency that prevails within it. Specifically, they expressed concern that civil society could provide a conduit for efforts at destabilization or interference by foreign states (Israel and Iran were mentioned by name in this context) and non-state actors (such as *Daesh*), or for criminal activities such as "money laundering" (which one respondent explicitly mentioned). The security implications of the influx of Syrian refugees, and the possibility that VEs or other forces hostile to Jordan could infiltrate the sector to create havoc in the kingdom, were identified as a specific risk. In the words of one government informant, "the situation with Syrians necessitates that we be careful and that we put restrictions on the sector. We need to rectify a chaotic situation; our motives [for seeking to tighten oversight of civil society activity] are not political [but security-related]."

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One theme tying together the findings above, is that GoJ officials tend to view civil society as a *source of irritation, but one that must be tolerated* - not so much because of its actual contributions (which officials view as limited and, on their own, as insufficient to justify the concerns and aggravation the sector creates for them), but because tolerating it is critical to the state's international image and to maintaining the cooperation and goodwill of donors. Thus, the government "endures" civil society and endeavors to circumscribe and contain it far more than it actively seeks to support its development. It strives to ensure that civil society remains under the tutelage of the state; that it does not behave as an autonomous actor; and that it does not overstep the limited mandate that the authorities envision for it: to support the state in such areas as the provision of education and health services and to provide it with information regarding the populations' needs and demands.

Civil Society's Perception of Donor Engagement

Finding 1. *Civil society activists realize that the geostrategic priorities of donors are decisive in shaping the latter's approach to, and support for, the sector, and they feel that the impact of assistance is distorted accordingly.* Specifically, they do not believe that donors are ready to run the risk of antagonizing a valuable ally by pressuring the GoJ on such issues as democratic reforms or the legal and regulatory environment for civil society activity, or by supporting CSOs active in politically sensitive areas. They feel that this timidity has long characterized donor engagement with civil society in Jordan and that it has been exacerbated by ongoing regional developments. They reason, in particular, that political reform is not, or no longer, a real objective for donors, and that it and most other concerns have been eclipsed by an overriding preoccupation with the Syrian refugee crisis. Some activists suggested that donors are hypocritical on the issue of "promoting reform" and that they do not merely tolerate the GoJ's restrictions on civil society activity and political space more generally, but are complicit in them.

Finding 2. *The most consequential criticism expressed by several civil society activists and experts alike was that donors have been more concerned with "moving money out of the door" and/or with using funding to signal their support for particular issues (including some that backfire in the Jordanian context), than with the actual impact of their assistance, or the sustainability of any gains that might accrue from it.* A related and previously mentioned criticism is that donors have no vision of what they want to do with, or where they want to take, civil society. Ironically, this claim mirrors some of the main criticisms directed at Jordanian CSOs: that they lack clear mission statements, are not guided by strategic thinking, do not pay sufficient attention to issues of sustainability, and are not responsive to the demands of their constituents. The team heard repeatedly that donors "just want to check the box," "spend their civil society budget," and "satisfy their own reporting requirements," with little thought given to whether their civil society funding is actually making a difference on the ground. This represents a devastating indictment of donors' engagement. It is tied to related claims: that donors do not sufficiently monitor grantees and projects; that impact evaluations are especially lacking; and that donors are unwilling to confront the problem created by CSOs that have mastered the arts of grant writing and reporting, but do not deliver on their commitments.

A related criticism was that donors often persist in funding certain organizations, despite the latter's well-known and consistent lack of impact, only because these organizations are associated with causes donors are interested in promoting, and even though these causes often do not resonate with the Jordanian public. That approach feeds into two negative perceptions of donors: that they are not interested in actual impact, and that they rely on CSOs to impose their own values and agendas. On culturally sensitive topics - such as women's rights and LGBT rights, which several civil society experts and activists mentioned explicitly in this context – the approach of several donors was criticized as intrusive, heavy-handed, and frequently carried out as if to project disregard for local sensitivities. One prominent civil society expert denounced it for having created an across-the-board backlash – at

donors, at recipient organizations, and at those very causes and constituencies assistance was allegedly intended to benefit.

Finding 3. *Many CSOs complained about donors' approach to capacity building.* They criticized it on three main, related grounds.

1) They pointed out that *it still revolves largely around "off-the-shelf," unimaginative and repetitive activities that do not contribute to long-term organizational viability*. In the words of one respondent, "donors still approach capacity-building as a three-day workshop." This opinion was echoed by other respondents who expressed frustration with one-off "training opportunities" that, in their view, do not enable organizations to experience structural and sustainable improvement in the quality of their internal operations. Several civil society interviewees expressed interest in long-term coaching and having in-house consultants that would support organizational systems over a long period of time.

Others suggested that donors should develop a mechanism to pre-qualify and approve selected local organizations for long-term funding. That funding would support not only the activities of those organizations, but also their long-term development and viability. In the minds of those advocating it, this path would create the consistency and steadfastness in capacity-building programming that is currently lacking. It would enable a donor to make a commitment to an organization and sustain its maturation over time. It would approach capacity building not as a moment or series of moments (a never-ending cycle of "training workshops in five-star hotels in Amman" with "always the same twenty faces in the room"), but as a long-term process. Instead of being directed at a multiplicity of organizations with very different profiles (or, rather, at their staff), it would be tailored to the particular needs of specific organizations previously identified as displaying potential for growth. It would help donors build organizational capacity incrementally, as they work to address the concrete needs of actual organizations, not the abstract needs of the generic organizations that often inspire the content of "capacity-building workshops." Instead of being activity-driven or project-based, this work would be organization-focused. It would allow for gains to build on each other and feed into rising levels of organizational maturity over time. It would ensure that donors work with the same organizations over a long period of time, strengthening their capacities incrementally and ensuring that gains can be cumulative and aggregate into the critical mass required for genuine organizational transformations.

2) Civil society respondents also underscored that *capacity-building should not focus exclusively on training individuals*, as is too often the case in their view, but that it should feature as well activities that seek to strengthen the organization itself. Many noted that trained staff often leave CSOs to work with donors or international NGOs; "training individuals is futile," as one activist put it, if CSOs cannot retain those who have been trained. Respondents linked this problem to insufficient salaries for professional staff, and specifically asked that donors allow CSOs to offer such staff higher salaries. Underlying these comments were three arguments: organizational capacity encompasses far more than just the capacity of individuals within the organization; training individuals has no lasting impact on organizational capacity if those individuals leave the organization after they are trained; and donors have yet to give due consideration to those factors in how they approach capacity building for civil society.

3) *Civil society activists consistently complained about donors' unwillingness to cover operational costs, long-term investment in staff development, and the capacity to undertake meaningful research.* They described this reluctance as a major impediment to actual capacity-building. One respondent remarked, "CSOs need a cushion to be creative and innovative" and suggested that donors' reluctance to pay for operational costs contributes to many CSO's misrepresentation (to donors) of the nature of some of

their activities.[62] This complaint again was linked to the project and activity-centered nature of donor funding, which does not allow organizations to invest in developing their research capacities or the skills of their staff in areas that are not directly linked to the specific projects or activities for which they have received or seek funding. Respondents often contrasted donors' unwillingness to cover CSOs' operational costs with those donors' (and their implementing partners') own high operational costs, which were denounced for exceeding the technical assistance provided, and for being disproportionate to the benefits actually accruing to communities. As one activist put it, "Implementing partners rent out large expensive offices in Amman and send out their junior staff to the governorates."

Finding 4. *Lack of coordination among donors, and these donors' frequently changing priorities, were two recurrent complaints.* Civil society activists argue that lack of donor coordination is partially to blame for the scattering of resources and efforts and for the continued fragmentation, infighting and corruption that prevail within the sector.[63] They believe it has contributed heavily to duplication of activities and sub-optimal use of resources, and that it has fed into a general lack of strategic thinking.

Interviewees also frequently portrayed CSOs as hostages to sudden and significant changes in donors' agendas. As CSOs depend so heavily on donor funding, shifts in donors' priorities undermine their ability to plan, be mission-driven, and show the steady focus, clear sense of direction and ability to follow through that are required for their endeavors to bear fruits. Some interviewees suggested that this situation prompts many CSOs to misrepresent the actual focus of their work: "We will accept to work in certain geographic areas or with certain social groups in order to secure the funding. We then will try to work into the project those components in which we actually are interested in working." All interviewees claimed that the refocusing of donors' efforts toward Syrian refugees has had a major and primarily negative impact on the sector.

Finding 5. *Civil society interviewees often expressed frustration and even irritation at donors' branding requirements and at what they described as cumbersome and complicated grant-application procedures.* Some respondents noted that branding requirements can jeopardize the success of projects and discourage CSOs from taking on sensitive but critical issues. One asked, "What is more important? To help improve policy, or to get credit? I understand the importance of getting credit, but if it gets in the way of being able to improve policy, that is a problem." Without being prompted to do so, several respondents mentioned USAID specifically in this context. One described the agency's branding requirements as "overkill" and "an obsession." He noted that while he understood the United States Government's (USG) desire for American taxpayers to be acknowledged for the assistance they make possible, branding should be in moderation and with due attention paid to its potential for backfiring. He mentioned entering a courtroom and seeing "USAID From the American People" labels prominently displayed on the back of every single computer; he noted that those labels did not exactly send a strong signal of judicial independence or for that matter, national sovereignty in an area as fundamental as the enforcement of the country's laws.

Some donors were criticized for the arduous process that they impose on local organizations that seek to qualify for their assistance. Complicated grant application procedures were denounced for disproportionately limiting CBOs that lack the necessary skills and human resources, even though they may be more closely embedded in their communities and therefore better able to serve them, than CSOs that are more proficient at grant writing. Several interviewees expressed the view that this

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[62] "When donors don't cover operational expenses, organizations have no choice but to resort to alternative ways of securing funding [to pay for those expenses]."

[63] In the words of one interviewee: "Donors can be conflict drivers. Their lack of coordination is driving a wedge between organizations."

cumbersome application process results in small organizations being unable to compete, and that it creates a disconnect between CSOs that receive funding and those that should.

GoJ Perceptions of Donor Engagement with Civil Society

Government informants were consistently and openly critical of the way in which the donor community has proceeded with its civil society assistance activities. Their primary criticisms were that donors have been lax at best in monitoring their programs and in demanding accountability from recipient organizations; that they have been insufficiently concerned with impact; and that flooding the sector with funding, combined with lack of coordination among themselves, has contributed heavily to corruption, duplication of activities, and waste. "Donors do not impose any conditionality and there is no accountability [by CSOs] regarding how funds are spent," noted a senior government official, before adding "a joke in town is that if you want to get rich quickly you should create an NGO and go chase funds with an Embassy."

Government respondents uniformly complained about donors channeling funds to CSOs without adequately coordinating with the GoJ. They argued that this situation has fueled opacity within the sector and is largely responsible for the "chaos" that prevails in it and which, in their opinion, is now the responsibility of the GoJ to "clean up." That criticism surfaced in virtually every single interview with government officials, and there typically was no mistaking the interviewee's irritation with donors in this regard. It was clear that government respondents viewed much of the funding directed at the sector as having been diverted away from the GoJ, its rightful recipient in their eyes, and that they felt the latter would have made better use of those resources.

SECTION V: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section builds on previous ones to summarize core challenges that civil society in Jordan confronts, and the main opportunities of which it might be able to take advantage, as it seeks to increase its contributions to the national objectives.

Challenges

Donors and CSOs alike have been generally unsuccessful in their efforts to transpose onto Jordan an idealized, western-centric vision of civil society. An approach to nurturing civil society that better reflects the kingdom's distinctive cultural, political and socioeconomic features has yet to be articulated, let alone implemented. Meanwhile, an understanding of the challenges that the sector faces must take into consideration its weaknesses, which Section I analyzed in detail. Looking beyond those weaknesses, the two overriding and intertwined challenges facing Jordanian civil society are as follows: 1) its overall *lack of impact and very limited relevance* to the constituencies it purports to serve, and to the development and advocacy causes to which it claims to be dedicated; and 2) it is *insufficiently embedded in society and lacks broad-based constituencies* that believe in it, recognize themselves in it, and are ready to stand up for it.[64]

With regard to the first challenge (lack of impact and relevance), civil society has performed poorly in three key "impact areas." First, it has failed to bring about meaningful changes in prevailing social norms and political culture, behavior, and literacy.[65] Second, it has been unable to effect legislative and policy changes. Third, even on development and service-delivery issues, its contributions have been circumscribed and ad hoc. Geographically or 'sectorally', the small gains made by civil society have not aggregated into a critical mass of change.

As for the second challenge (lack of broad, issue-based constituencies), CSOs remain unanchored in their respective communities. Public attitudes toward them are characterized far more by apathy, indifference, skepticism, and cynicism (and, in some cases, outright hostility) than by empathy and support. The focus of CSOs' activities reflects donor priorities far more than community input or needs assessment.

Opportunities

There are currently no great opportunities knocking at civil society's door in Jordan. The regional and domestic contexts are not supportive of its growth. The sector has dug a fairly deep hole for itself, and

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[64] These two factors are closely connected to each other; insufficient grassroots support and credibility goes a long way toward accounting for civil society's limited impact.

[65] With respect to norms, society has become more conservative and reactionary tendencies and currents have been on the rise. Despite generous donor funding for women's causes and CSOs in the past two decades, there is no evidence that public stances on women have become more liberal overall. In fact movements that promote gender equality are increasingly being constrained by a conservative religious discourse that is spreading through TV and radio and funded largely by countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt (USAID, *Women's Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Jordan Case Study*, 2014, p.6). Among elites and the public alike, political values and behavior do not appear to have moved decisively in a more democratic direction. Youth remain largely apathetic, civic knowledge among them is still weak, and many of those in their ranks who are most politicized have drifted toward extremism. Overall, the readiness to engage in the public sphere remains low, and regional developments have made people more reluctant to assert their rights and demand reform.

donors have contributed in significant ways to that situation. Nonetheless, a few rays of hope deserve mention.

First and foremost, *civil society by and large is not in denial. It is capable of critical self-analysis and is aware of its shortcomings*. While on its own it seems incapable of initiating the changes that are needed to overcome those flaws, its very dependency on donors can help nudge it in that direction.

Second, *civil society has islands of good performance. Lessons can be drawn from their experience, and these lessons can inform CSOs' operations as well as donors' approach to the sector*. For instance, during interviews CSOs with effective advocacy campaigns pointed to several keys to success:

    a) Backing-up advocacy efforts with high-quality research and data;
    b) Being able to suggest concrete and practical alternatives to the policies or situations that one seeks to change;
    c) Finding other ways of demonstrating utility to decision-makers;
    d) Framing issues so that they resonate with the wider public; and
    e) Identifying the "right" government officials (those who are most likely to be receptive to the issue on which one advocates and can contribute to effecting change about it) and cultivating access to them.[66]

Similarly, RONGOs' successful outreach to the private sector cannot be explained solely by royal family sponsorship. Their ability to demonstrate value and impact on the ground, their qualified staff and fundraising skills, and the manner in which they have sought to institutionalize partnerships with businesses have been important factors as well. Lessons from their approach can be disseminated so as to create a better understanding of what it takes to establish successful patterns of private sector-CSO collaboration.[67] Valuable lessons also can be drawn from civil society's successes in such areas as legal aid and protection services for women.

Third, *the GoJ has made overtures to civil society*. Mechanisms and platforms have been put in place through which the GoJ seeks input from civil society.[68] There is pervasive and warranted skepticism about the government's sincerity in this area, but *the sector should endeavor to make the most of what is being offered*. Decision-makers may learn to overcome their distrust and contempt for civil society if CSOs can prove utility to them, for instance, by embedding themselves in their communities and developing real issue-based constituencies; by becoming more knowledgeable about community needs and more effective at relaying those needs to officials; by becoming credible sources of data collection and analysis; by offering evidence-based feedback on policies and governance challenges; and by piloting programs and services. Trust is earned, negative opinions and preconceptions can be revisited in the face of new evidence, and civil society and the GoJ are not condemned to antagonistic and unproductive ways of relating to one another. If CSOs can position themselves as gatekeepers to particular communities and constituencies, their value to the government will rise, and if, and when, that takes place their relevance and impact should increase markedly. In the meantime, civil society can lobby for more representation on policymaking bodies.

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[66] One important factor behind the success of the Jordan Center for Legal Aid (JCLA) has been its efforts to profile MPs and identify committee members capable of influencing the issues areas on which JCLA works. "Do your homework" is certainly a valuable lesson to be drawn.

[67] RONGOs are not the only CSOs that have been able to secure funding from private donors and businesses. Organizations such as Mizan and the al-Hayat Center also have had some success in this area.

[68] Examples include through the representation of civil society organizations on higher councils and through initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership.

Finally, most informants share the opinion that the current decentralization law will not bring about real devolution of power, but instead will create new layers of bureaucracy and control. If they were to be proven wrong, *the impact of genuine decentralization on civil society could prove very positive*. CSOs in general and CBOs in particular, are typically uniquely positioned to take advantage of efforts to grant citizens a greater role at the local level. Civil society can position itself as the voice of the community and as a key actor for improving local governance and service delivery. It can learn to harness social-accountability mechanisms to enhance the responsiveness of institutions and officials. True decentralization would increase the incentives for civil society to play that role, and if it were able to perform those functions its credibility, legitimacy, and therefore, impact might increase accordingly. Genuine decentralization also would create more reasons for donors to engage with CBOs. That may represent an opportunity in itself, since most CBOs are far less set in their ways and approaches than "professional NGOs." Therefore, with proper coaching and monitoring by implementing partners, they could avoid the traps into which other CSOs have fallen.

CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR USAID PROGRAMMING

Recommendation I:

Assess Impact through Constituency Building

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings

As a rule, Jordanian CBOs and NGOs *have not performed as well as they should have with respect to developing broad constituencies for themselves, their activities and the causes they embrace, and for building upon or scaling-up their discrete achievements so as to generate broader, more systemic transformations*. That typically is true for even those CSOs that are better known and generally are viewed as among the most successful ones in the sector. Although they may have conducted activities that filled genuine gaps in service delivery or that have brought attention to critical societal issues, one is typically left with two sets of inter-related questions:

a) So what? What's next? Are the "successes" in sustainable so as to provide the foundation for other achievements? Have they triggered significant behavioral changes and/or attitudinal shifts among large segments of the population and/or key decision-makers? Have they contributed to more participatory processes and enhanced levels of accountability and transparency? Have they resulted in changes to public policy or relevant laws?

b) Which broad constituencies of support (for the CSO and the objectives to which it is committed) have been developed as a result of assistance to that CSO? How many more Jordanians are willing to rally behind the cause embraced by that organization and commit time and energy to it?

The **"So what? What's next?"** question is critical because even a series of ad hoc, one-time successes do not necessarily aggregate into *a broader dynamic of change*. Such a dynamic would entail a CSO's ability to capitalize on successful one-time activities to tackle larger underlying issues and achieve tangible gains on those issues, while at the same time widening its base of grassroots support and creating a broader constituency for the objective(s) to which it is dedicated.

Constituency building is critical because it is the best guarantor of *relevance and sustainability*;[69] as it is critical to enabling individual CSOs and civil society as a whole to *protect themselves against threats to them*; and because it must occur if *dependency on donors* ever is to be reduced. A CSO is unlikely to be viewed as relevant and to be sustainable if it cannot persuade people to rally around its agenda, and if it cannot convince grassroots constituencies that it represents a vital instrument for making progress toward that agenda.

Constituency building also represents a key source of *resiliency* for an individual CSO and for the sector as a whole. When civil society finds itself on the defensive – for example, when the state seeks to constrict its freedom to maneuver or when government officials use the media to discredit it – its primary weakness lies in its lack of broad constituencies ready to rally in its defense, or which could be mobilized to that effect.

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[69] "Relevance" is understood here as both "micro-relevance" (relevance to the daily lives of Jordanians) and "macro-relevance" (relevance to the challenges facing the kingdom).

The most significant structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the CSS in Jordan can be traced back to the fact that most CSOs are *not genuinely embedded in the communities* within which they operate, and are not viewed by society as *legitimate spokespersons for the constituencies and issues for which they claim to be standard bearers*. This lack of organic ties between most CSOs and those that are supposed to form their grassroots base of support betrays the *disregard CSOs have shown toward the vital task of constituency building*. It also reflects the disconnect between the activities in which CSOs typically engage and the nature of assistance they receive, and the kind of endeavors and approaches that would help them build constituencies.

Suggested Solution
The assessment's findings suggest that donors must become far more concerned with the impact (or lack thereof) of their civil society assistance programming, and that a rethinking of how impact traditionally has been evaluated is in order. The impact of assistance to a given CSO and the sector as a whole should be measured in terms of whether or not that assistance has enabled recipient CSOs to: *build broad issue-based constituencies; embed themselves in the communities in which they operate; develop a better understanding of those communities' needs; and become more effective at communicating and addressing them*. That indicator should take precedence over those that relate to different components of organizational capacity, the quality of internal governance, or completion of particular projects or activities.[70] This guideline should inform the design and delivery of assistance to both individual CSOs and the sector as a whole. It should also shape how performance (of a civil society assistance program and individual CSOs) is assessed.

Since constituency building is critical to CSOs' actual impact, when designing civil society activities and when monitoring their impact, a crucial variable in *assessing the performance of an individual CSO, and of assistance to that CSO*, should be whether the recipient organization can demonstrate it was successful in building a broad constituency for itself and its central mission. For the same reasons, the success of *assistance to the sector as a whole* should be viewed as largely a function of whether that sector is succeeding in developing *a broader base of societal support* for itself and the causes to which it is dedicated. *The most reliable way for a CSO to enjoy grassroots support is for it to address a real need in the community or within a given constituency*. Whether or not CSOs meet clear community- or constituency-based needs, whether they have made genuine and demonstrable efforts to identify such needs, and how to help them become more effective at doing so should be critical criteria when selecting organizations to assist and/or determining the content of the assistance.

Recommendation 2:

Support Strong Intermediary Organizations to Channel Assistance to Civil Society

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings
Donor support (including USAID's) for civil society has been insufficiently strategic with respect to the range and nature of recipient organizations. Specifically, *too much effort has been devoted to trying to build the institutional capacity of a large number of small organizations*. Many years into this approach, there is overwhelming evidence is that it has failed to produce results commensurate with the amount of resources donors have poured into the sector. That is particularly true if, as suggested above, the impact of civil society assistance is measured in terms of whether or not CSOs have been able to build

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[70] That is not to suggest that the quality of internal governance should not be viewed as an important assistance objective. It is only to underscore the primacy of constituency building.

broad constituencies for themselves and the causes they embrace. While the capacities of several individual organizations have been strengthened, the same cannot be said of the sector as a whole. Small and isolated islands of relative performance in a sea of mediocrity do not amount to success, especially when the objective was not to build a few such islands but to ensure that gains would be spread across the sector. The moment has come to reassess this approach.

The *scattering of resources and energy across a large number of small organizations* has yielded no evidence that civil society as a whole has become more credible, resilient, and self-sustaining. In fact, there is much evidence to the contrary. Important success stories notwithstanding, it is questionable whether the institutional capacity of most recipient organizations has been enhanced sufficiently to enable them to have a meaningful impact. For that matter, as discussed earlier, it is not at all apparent that institutional strengthening is the key to having such impact. The approach followed by donors has not broadened the constituencies that the sector can mobilize or that will mobilize on their own to defend it when it comes under pressure. Many, if not most, recipient CBOs and NGOs do not appear to have made the most of the resources put at their disposal in the form of grants, training activities, and other efforts to strengthen their institutional capacity; many have found themselves hard-pressed to effectively handle the funding and resources they have received. In some instances the types of skills and training provided by donors have gone "over the head" of recipient organizations.

Suggested Solution

A potential solution to the above problem lies in *supporting the development of a number of carefully selected Intermediary Organizations (IOs) and relying upon them to channel assistance to the sector as a whole*. Several years ago (when it launched the CIS program) USAID made a conscious decision that its assistance to civil society would be driven by a desire to "go beyond the usual [CSO] suspects." There is a compelling logic for trying to ensure that the benefits of assistance are not overly concentrated in the hands of a few CSOs. At the same time, the experience of the past few years (not only USAID's, but also that of the donor community as a whole) suggests that "spreading the wealth," when it comes to civil society assistance, has its own downside. A middle path between unhealthy concentration of assistance on a few organizations and excessive dispersion should be identified through the following approach:

1) In each of the major sub-sectors of civil society (service delivery, advocacy, and development) and geographic locations in which USAID wishes to have impact, *identify a core group of NGOs with substantial capacity and a proven record of achievements or with the potential to develop both*. The emphasis should be on what is working, especially what is/or could work at scale.

2) *Strengthen selected entities in two areas: ability to build constituencies for themselves, and capacity to serve as effective vehicles for the delivery of assistance to other CSOs* (NGOs and CBOs).

3) *Support for IOs should entail core funding*, understood as funding that is not tied to a particular project or set of activities, but is intended to provide organizations with the freedom and breathing space to grow and mature. These organizations' capacities should be strengthened not only in traditionally understood areas of internal management (finances, project, human resources, etc.), but also with regard to mission and vision development, field research techniques, and data gathering and analysis, especially with regard to the ability to conduct needs assessment of communities. Core funding should be deployed to help IOs reflect on the challenges faced by the sub-sectors in which they operate, identify potential specialization niches for themselves, and articulate coherent long-term strategic plans to achieve their vision. USAID would draw on best practices for releasing core funding. Assistance might entail exposing recipient NGOs to how similar organizations elsewhere have used core funding to grow and develop constituencies. Several CSOs expressed interest in having technical experts join their teams for sustained periods in order to provide hands-on support with proposal writing, project management,

and monitoring or evaluation; such forms of assistance might be folded into core funding. USAID would closely monitor the extent to which core funding is being deployed to serve the above purposes, but the kind of monitoring and performance evaluation involved would be different from traditional assistance monitoring.[71] Inspired by many interviewees' comments, the idea is for USAID to *make a long-term commitment to several carefully selected IOs and sustain their institutional development in comprehensive ways.* A commitment made in the hope that the strengthening of several such organizations will create the critical mass required for qualitative change in the sector, and that it will have ripple effects across the sector through the CBOs and NGOs, which these IOs will be tasked with coaching and nurturing.

4) *Assistance to the selected IOs would be conditional on their committing to working with a cluster of clearly identified NGOs and CBOs.* That work would entail strengthening the capacities of those NGOs and CBOs; expanding their constituency bases so as to make them more grounded in their respective communities; and channeling their needs and demands upward through advocacy at the national level. Prior to receiving funding and as a condition for it, each recipient IO would be required to identify those NGOs and CBOs for which it proposed to operate as a mentor. It would have to explain why it chose each smaller organization; how it went about vetting it; what that organization would be expected to contribute to the implementation of the IO's strategic objectives; and what the IO would expect to do to strengthen the institutional capacity and constituency bases of those other organizations. In short, each IO would be required to propose a high-intensity mentoring plan tailored to the specific needs of each of its mentees. Those mentees would constitute the primary constituency of the IO, and in turn would be expected to grow their own grassroots constituencies.

Mentor and mentees should have similar or compatible missions and funding timeframes. IOs will be expected to play a leading role in three areas: the design and implementation of interventions that reflect the primary needs and demands of their mentees; promoting coordination, information exchange, and best practices; and developing professional fundraising capabilities to wean IOs and their mentees from donor funding. In the long run, identifying IOs and doubling down on assistance to them should help them attract the local talent that they will need to maximize value for their mentees. To attain this however it will be critical to ensure through proper monitoring that the IOs are using the resources provided to them not only to develop their own capacities and constituencies, but to expand those of their mentees as well.

Such IOs would have to be civic-driven, grounded in their communities, and should emphasize issue-focused constituency building based on continuous needs assessment. These organizations would also have to be cognizant of other organizations' efforts in their sectors, thus recognizing the importance of cumulative change. Donors can start with a small number of IOs and build models of success that can be scaled.

Recommendation 3:

Assist Organizations to Cultivate Local Donors and Explore Venture Philanthropy

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings
Civil society's dependence on donors for funding and priority setting hinders its sustainability and emergence as a credible actor. Donor dependency dis-incentivizes building the necessary organic relationships with local communities and constituencies and inhibits CSOs from pursuing as vigorously as

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[71] The merit of core funding for NGOs with a proven record of accomplishment was a theme mentioned to the team by both CIS and by at least three NGOs.

they should potential sources of local funding. Jordanian CSOs lack knowledge of (and sometimes genuine interest in) those communities and constituencies' most important needs, as they instead focus on securing short-term grants from donors to retain staff and remain in existence. Breaking out of that cycle is imperative if civil society is to become viable, credible, and sustainable.

Suggested Solution

Jordanian civil society must be able to generate interest from local donors. While at this stage it is difficult to envision significant local donor support for CSOs advocating political reform, private donors, including philanthropists, businesspersons, and foundations, should be funding the development arm of civil society, supporting such causes as basic infrastructure in rural areas, job creation, poverty alleviation, social service provision, and even civic education initiatives. There is no lack of available indigenous capital that could be directed toward supporting civil society causes. Nor is the population unwilling to contribute to worthy causes: Jordanians already donate a portion of their income to charity in fulfillment of religious *zakat* obligations, and the private sector often supports causes championed by RONGOs. For CSOs to gain access to local funding, three developments must occur:

1) CSOs need to *shed their negative public image*, including by grounding themselves in their communities; by becoming more attuned to and capable of addressing communities' needs; and by concentrating on causes that resonate with the public.

2) CSOs must develop a *clear and compelling strategy of outreach to, and communication with, private donors*. They must learn how to identify specific local sources of funding that may be inclined to support the particular causes they embrace, and they must then convince those donors, who are looking for visibility and impact, to provide financial assistance. To do so, they must be able to point to tangible evidence that they are worthy of that support, and that they will make the best of it to enhance the well-being of their respective communities or to substantively advance the agendas to which they are committed. That means they must not only "clean up their act" but also engage donors in compelling conversations about their long-term visions and workplans for realizing them, highlighting mutual shared value in the process. In presenting themselves to donors interested in results, they must learn how to focus on outcomes, not outputs, as they currently are prone to do.

3) *Specific mechanisms need to be put in place* to help CSOs develop the above skills and to facilitate the flow of funds from private donors to CSOs.

Venture philanthropy (VP) provides a path for realizing those objectives. VP organizations (VPOs) engage with CSOs in ways that seem particularly appropriate to the Jordanian context. They do not just extend grants to recipient organizations, but engage far more directly and extensively with them at the strategic and operational levels.[72] They follow an investment approach to helping recipient organizations identify niches, and they are deeply involved in setting those organizations' strategy, activity portfolios, and workplans. They focus on encouraging innovation, sustainability, and maximizing returns on investments, taking a long-term view of what constitutes profitable investment and evaluating impact in term of outcomes, not outputs. They emphasize performance assessment, monitoring results, measureable outcomes, and achieving milestones. They help build the capacities of beneficiaries by funding operating costs and providing technical assistance in such areas as management expertise, communication skills, and executive coaching. Instead of funding projects and programs, they offer multi-year support aimed at enhancing the long-term viability of recipients.

USAID and other donors should consider the VPO model as a means of supporting Jordanian civil society. Local VPOs could vet CSOs and IOs to create funding streams toward those that show real

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[72] Consistently with this high-level engagement model, they often take seats on those organizations' boards.

promise of viability and impact (as defined in this document). In light of the emphasis placed on establishing IOs and relying heavily on them for structuring and delivering assistance to civil society, special attention should be paid to the relationship between VPOs and IOs, since the former would be critical to ensuring the viability and effectiveness of the latter. VPOs would serve as funding intermediaries between local donors and IOs and CSOs. They would help build public confidence in civil society and generate interest among the private sector and philanthropists who may be inclined to support CSOs if VPOs provided guarantees of greater accountability and performance expectations. VPOs could assist in identifying funding markets where a mix of donors might be found with motivations to sponsor particular sub-sectors or initiatives. Those markets might include government funding pools and corporations as well as individual donors (including crowd funding) already joined by shared concerns about specific issues. VPOs would then seek to match given funding markets or donors with specific IOs or CSOs, which VPOs would determine as showing promise for advancing the particular cause or set of issues of interest to those funding markets.

VPOs not only would serve as mechanisms for channeling local funding to CSOs and IOs, but because of the business model that is central to their modus operandi they would also help foster innovation and build capacity within the sector. The direct link they would create between the private sector and civil society should help import needed business skills and approaches to solving social problems. It could result in the kind of game-changing initiatives of which Jordanian civil society is in dire need.

Recommendation 4:

Help Civil Society Improve its Public Image

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings

As the fieldwork confirmed, civil society has an unfavorable public image. This problem reflects and feeds into others: it makes it more difficult for CSOs to build grassroots constituencies; it contributes to and perpetuates their dependency on donors (which often become the primary "constituency" of CSOs); it undermines the readiness of local donors to contribute to the sector; and it facilitates the task of those who seek to discredit civil society and/or constrict its operating space. In other words, while the poor image of Jordanian civil society stems from the sector's flaws, it in turn exacerbates many of those flaws. Since it operates as a dependent and an independent variable when it comes to accounting for the challenges civil society faces, it must be addressed head-on if those challenges are to be overcome.

Suggested Solution

The image of civil society will not change until the sector "cleans up its act:" as the sector's performance picks up, and as evidence of impact (as understood in this document) becomes clearer, civil society's image should improve as well. Performance is not the only determinant of image, and as noted above, image also impacts performance. Consequently, *image deficits must be addressed through image-specific programming. The latter should entail a comprehensive communication strategy for the entire sector and public communication and messaging skills for individual CSOs and in particular, for the IOs suggested above.* Two types of intervention should be considered:

1) *The sector's success stories should be publicized* to improve civil society's image and to serve as an inspiration to other CSOs. This task could be undertaken by some of the IOs discussed above, or by a handful of CSOs that show potential in the public communications field. Technical assistance should be offered to ensure that the relevant success-story information will be cast effectively, and to support the dissemination of that information. Different narratives should be constructed for different audiences (e.g., potential local donors or VPOs vs. the broader public).

2) *Assistance should be provided to help the sector develop a multi-faceted communications strategy toward the population.* Specific IOs and/or a mix of national- and governorate-level NGOs showing potential in this area should be selected to play a leading role in designing and implementing the strategy. This role should involve keeping track of tangible achievements by CSOs in specific sectors and geographical areas, and finding ways of communicating to diverse audiences what is compelling about their work. The VPOs should also be involved in that process, since generating local donor interest in funding CSOs necessitates a clearer sales pitch by the latter. The sector's communication strategy should reflect a grasp of the main charges leveled at civil society by the public, government officials, and others, and it should entail crafting one or more relevant counter-narratives with a view to debunking the misunderstandings, distortions, and misrepresentations that surround civil society. Examples of success stories could be folded into these counter-narratives. The emphasis should be on demonstrating value and concrete impact through simple but effective messages liable to gain traction with targeted audiences. This approach should not preclude the development of more complex messages that aim to convey the long-term vision of specific CSOs or IOs, the approaches they are following to realize that vision, and the challenges and successes they are encountering along the way.

Recommendation 5:

Support Civic Education Programming that Advances Knowledge of Civil Society

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings

Interviews and FGDs conducted during the assessment made it clear that after over two decades of generous donor funding of the CSS and countless training, capacity building, institutional strengthening, and awareness-raising activities, Jordanians still have, at best, a vague, distorted, and often wholly inaccurate perception of civil society, let alone what civil society can and should contribute to the country's political and socioeconomic progress. It is futile to hope that a better understanding will emerge as donors continue the same activities. Yet unless and until people develop a better grasp of what civil society is and a greater appreciation for what it can contribute, it will not grow in an organic manner, and the returns on assistance to it will remain modest at best.

Throughout interviews, a recurrent claim by civil society experts and activists alike was that "the public does not know what civil society is."[73] That claim was confirmed by FGDs and echoed by donors and implementers. Meanwhile, interviews with senior government officials revealed wide variations in their level of understanding of "civil society," as a general concept and in terms of its tangible manifestations in the Jordanian context. It is not even evident that most Jordanian civil society activists themselves have more than a very rudimentary understanding of what civil society is and how it has manifested itself in a broad range of political, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts. Civil society activists, public opinion leaders, and government officials should be familiar with the nature of the contributions that civil society has made to democracy-building, political reform and economic development in a variety of settings in the past thirty years. They also should be acquainted with some of the key debates about civil society among development professionals, the global civil society community, and academics. However, the fieldwork yielded no evidence that such is the case in Jordan.

It is striking that even those donors that have devoted significant resources to trying to nurture Jordanian civil society have not yet made a concerted effort to tackle gaps in key stakeholders' understanding of the concept. After a quarter-century of sizable donor support for CSOs in Jordan, and
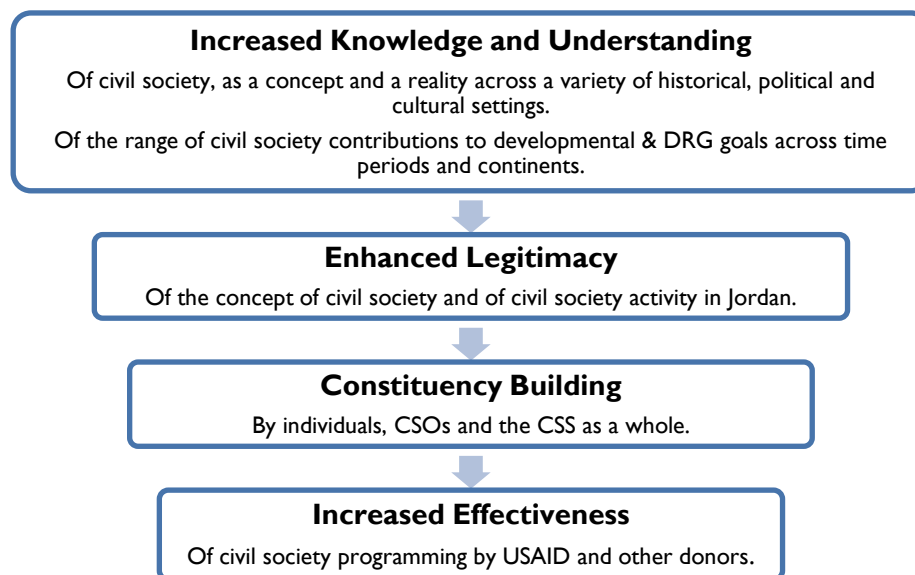
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[73] "Has no clue about what the concept truly means" might be a more accurate rendering of what the team heard.

despite the existence of thousands of them in a country with a relatively small population, civil society still is viewed as an alien, imported concept that donors have sought to "impose" on local society.

The situation summarized above needs to be corrected for reasons directly connected to the other recommendations contained in this report. Civil society will not develop *broader constituencies* (Recommendation 1), a *more positive public image* (Recommendation 4), and *support from local donors* (Recommendation 3) unless the misunderstandings and deliberate misrepresentations associated with its very meaning have been successfully rebutted, and until people become more aware of the significant contributions it can make to bettering their lives and improving prospects for their children. A more sophisticated understanding of civil society grounded in historical and comparative examples also would help the public realize that even though civil society emerged as a western concept, it has been able to grow organically and further human development in non-Western settings. That, in turn, would go a long way toward increasing the legitimacy of civil society and pulling the rug out from under those who seek to portray it as culturally alien and a vehicle for western interference.

The above analysis points to the thread that connects several goals for civil society assistance. Each goal is important in itself and as a means of making progress toward the next, with an ultimate objective of enhanced effectiveness of USAID assistance to civil society.

Increased Knowledge and Understanding

Of civil society, as a concept and a reality across a variety of historical, political and cultural settings.

Of the range of civil society contributions to developmental & DRG goals across time periods and continents.

⬇

Enhanced Legitimacy

Of the concept of civil society and of civil society activity in Jordan.

⬇

Constituency Building

By individuals, CSOs and the CSS as a whole.

⬇

Increased Effectiveness

Of civil society programming by USAID and other donors.

Suggested Solution

The principal cause of the lack of a true understanding of civil society lies in the educational system. During their primary- and secondary-school years, Jordanians are introduced neither to the concept itself nor to the broader analytical and conceptual backdrop to make sense of it. Those fortunate enough to receive a university education are exposed belatedly and superficially to the idea of civil society through the `ulum `askariyya (military sciences) course that undergraduates must take. There is widespread recognition that this course (essentially a "civics 101" requirement) is poorly designed and taught. The material in it is dry and out of sync with young Jordanians' interests and outlooks, and disconnected from today's global and regional realities. It also conveys views of citizens' rights and obligations that transparently favor the authorities.

The educational system's failure to introduce Jordanians to the concept of civil society as well as to related ideas and critical thought leaves even educated Jordanian citizens vulnerable to disinformation and stereotypical ideas about civil society. That might not be so detrimental to substantive discussions of

civil society and its role if other institutions (media, government, private foundations, and CSOs themselves) were able to fill the resulting vacuum. That is not the case.

This is all part of a bigger problem. As the Youth Assessment conducted in 2014 for USAID noted, Jordan's educational system does not promote civic knowledge or participation. Anachronistic and rigid teaching stifles discussion and debate and promotes subservience to authority. It does not develop critical thinking; does not encourage innovation, creativity, and taking initiatives; and does not cultivate among youth the civic consciousness that would enable them to grow into citizens with the inclination and know-how to engage in the public sphere. The broader learning environment for youth is plagued by deeply entrenched conservative social and gender norms and features few outlets to encourage and enable youth to participate meaningfully in public life. Thus, by the time donors "invest" in activities meant to "empower" youth in the public sphere these youth already display a combination of apathy, resignation, and feelings of uselessness and disenfranchisement, and their attitude toward such activities feature a mix of skepticism and cynicism. Indeed, when one listens to even those Jordanian activists who "speak civil society," one often detects a shallow understanding of the breadth of issues associated with that concept as well as a lack of any true commitment to it. It is sometimes hard to avoid the impression that the "advocacy," "awareness raising," "community mobilization" and related phrases that these activists invoke are repeated simply as mantras learned through donor-funded workshops and "training activities," and proposal writing. Those who utter those phrases often seem to lack a genuine understanding of the realities or logic behind them, or of the contributions of civil society across both time periods and time zones. Their use of the language contains no conviction or passion, but rather a sense that the expressions involved are just "things one needs to say" when one is "in the civil society business."

So what is to be done? The team recommends civic-education activities that address the issues highlighted above. Relevant programming might be carried out in coordination with other U.S. Embassy interventions and/or the Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange. It could unfold along three main tracks.

The first track would comprise activities intended to provide civil society activists with a "thicker" understanding of civil society and the role it has played in a variety of contexts to help respond to a multitude of problems. Experiences would have to be carefully selected to resonate with Jordanians by being relevant to the challenges Jordan currently confronts or is likely to face in future. Assistance may seek to familiarize activists with the debates among development professionals and scholars regarding civil society's roles in poverty alleviation, service delivery, political reform, and the fight against VE, and with best practices and success stories (in the region as well as beyond it) of cooperation between civil society and other institutions (parliaments, executive-branch agencies, municipalities, media, etc.) to address developmental challenges. Generic questions to be addressed through case studies might include:

a) What can civil society actually contribute (and what is unreasonable to expect from it) to tackle problems for which its contributions often are sought?
b) What are some of the emerging, most innovative ways of engaging civil society to further national objectives? Conversely, what are the pitfalls associated with certain types of engagement of civil society?
c) What can be learned from selected civil society experiences in Latin America, Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, and Africa that is relevant to the Jordanian context?

The second and more difficult track would entail technical support for the development of new high school and university-level curricula on civics, and for related teachers and faculty training. The curricula in question would not be specific to civil society but would be part of a broader and redesigned

approach to civic education, built around contemporary global examples and issues, and aligned with the aspirations and interests of young Jordanians. As noted above, there is little hope of building a real constituency for civil society in Jordan, of changing widespread negative attitudes toward it, of rebutting politically motivated attacks against it, or of cultivating community donors for it, unless the population at large develops a better understanding of civil society's nature and roles in a modern, democratic society – and does so at an early stage in life. This second track, therefore, is critical. Pursuing it would require significant GoJ buy-in and coordination of the endeavor with the relevant ministries.[74]

As the Youth Assessment recommended, the third track, which would complement the first two, would entail support for extracurricular activities that nurture youth's interest in becoming more civically engaged and provide them with the skills to do so. This track might include scaling-up scouting activities and overhauling school parliaments and student councils so that students can feel genuinely invested in them. Initiatives along those lines have taken place before (with the support of the USG), but they have fallen short of achieving the objectives of promoting attitudes and know-how conducive to civic engagement. Such initiatives are in dire need of revamping. Support for other social endeavors among youth that nurture the same inclination and skills should be considered. To be successful, those endeavors will need to revolve around imaginative approaches that reflect a keen understanding of youth's aspirations. CSOs could be given an opportunity to compete for grants aimed at facilitating this creative process.

Recommendation 6:

Ensure "Congruence" in Programming

The Problem: Link to Assessment Findings
Interviews and FGDs repeatedly pointed to two types of disconnect affecting the CSS in Jordan:

1) *Between the focus of many CSOs' activities and the outstanding needs of the community in which they operate.* CSOs are often blamed for rolling out programming that is not consistent with what their alleged constituencies most want or need. CSOs lack a true understanding of the needs of those whom they claim to represent or serve; they rarely conduct needs assessment; and they respond to the priorities of donors, not to those of Jordanians.

2) *Between the content of donors' assistance to many CSOs and the kind of support most appropriate to their distinct profile.* Just as CSOs often implement programs that seem to be at variance with the primary needs or aspirations of those whom these CSOs claim to help, donors carry out "capacity-building" projects that frequently are misaligned with the specific strengths, weaknesses, and level of organizational maturity of recipient CSOs. Technical assistance may not target the right persons in the organization (e.g., it may concentrate on mid-level staff or volunteers, and not on those who set the tone for the organization); it may be inconsistent with the kind of support the CSO most needs or wants; and it may concentrate excessively on processes (e.g., financial systems and M&E procedures) at the expense of a needed focus on seeking to affect the outlook, management style, way of thinking, and priorities of decision-makers within the organization. Frequently, the assistance is not of the type that the organization genuinely can absorb or make the best use of, and it does not lead to improvements that can be sustained after assistance ends. Sometimes it entails efforts to impart skills, familiarize the staff with approaches, or put in place systems that are too complex to be practical and useful for the CSO's level of maturity and stage of development. Assistance that is overly sophisticated for a given CSO will yield few tangible and sustainable gains for it.

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[74] Receptive officials at the Royal Court also may be approached to gauge their readiness to facilitate this effort.

Suggested Solution

Congruence should be a guiding principle for civil society assistance. Congruence is used here to refer to at least two imperatives:

1) *Recipient CSOs should provide tangible and specific evidence that they are being responsive to the needs of their communities or issue-based constituencies*. This harks back to Recommendation 1: CSOs must build genuine constituencies and truly embed themselves in the communities they claim to serve; the impact of assistance must be evaluated accordingly. Specific steps, including support for community needs assessment, must be built into assistance packages to ensure that this dimension of congruence is realized.

2) Donors, too, should be mindful of the congruence imperative in their own approach to CSOs and the sector as a whole. *Programming should be designed and implemented in a way that is sensitive to the distinct characteristics of recipient CSOs and the environment in which these organizations operate*. A given intervention should be attuned to the recipient CSO's level of organizational maturity, its outstanding needs, the skills of its staff, and the vision (or lack thereof) of its leadership. For this to occur, it may be necessary to support fewer organizations and tailor assistance to their specific needs.[75]

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[75] This suggestion is consistent with Recommendation 2, which proposed to focus on a handful of IOs and rely on them for the delivery of assistance, and which warned against the scattering of resources and energy inherent in approaches that seek to build the institutional capacity of a large number of small organizations.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Statement of Work

**Civil Society Sector Assessment and
Civic Initiatives Support Program (CIS) Performance Evaluation**

**STATEMENT OF WORK
April 26, 2015**

I.   INTRODUCTION

The Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program that focuses on building a vibrant civil society will be entering its third year of operations in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region since the activity's inception and USAID's commitment to supporting the civil society sector, USAID is requesting a civil society sector assessment and a project evaluation to inform CIS's third year work plan, which will be developed in October 2015.

The assessment will be conducted first so that its findings can inform the final tool development for the evaluation. Both the assessment and the evaluation will use a primarily qualitative approach. As discussed further in the "Assessment Questions" section below, the assessment will focus on identifying the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to key national objectives; it will seek to capture the perceptions of civil society by the general public, Government of Jordan (GOJ) officials, and donors, as well as civil society's perceptions of GOJ officials and donors' engagement with civil society; and it will build on that analysis to zero-in on the challenges and opportunities faced by Jordan's civil society as it endeavors to increase its contributions to key national objectives. Those conclusions, in turn, will suggest intervention priorities for USAID's civil society programming, including but not limited to CIS.

With input from the assessment, the evaluation will seek to gauge the effectiveness of CIS's grant mechanisms and capacity-building activities in the following areas: supporting advocacy, community mobilization, and civic engagement; furthering Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) organizational development and ability to achieve their objectives, including addressing community needs; improving the quality and quantity of interaction between civil society and the GOJ; reaching out to CSOs and CBOs outside Amman; and ensuring that women and men have equitable access to, participation in, and benefit from program activities.

Based on their findings, both the assessment and the evaluation will make practical and actionable recommendations for the next CIS work plan that will be developed in October 2015. Recommendations will include those for component continuation, modifications, and potential future programming for civil society.

Details of the project to be evaluated:

Project Title:	USAID – Civic Initiatives Support Program
Implementing Partner:	FHI 360
Total Cost:	$20 million for 2013-2016; $30 million estimated for 2016-2018

Duration: 2013-2018

II.   BACKGROUND

A. CONTEXT

The civic sector in Jordan is playing a growing role in governance and development. Relative political openness has enabled many organizations to increase their influence and overall impact as they engage in civil, social and political activities. Civil society is activating citizen participation, meeting needs and shaping policy. It provides a myriad of services to the population and is at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the ongoing influx of Syrian refugees into the country.

Until 2008, the Law on Societies and Social Bodies (Law 33 of 1966) governed CSOs in Jordan, subjecting the sector to government interference. In 2008, the Law on Societies (Law 51 of 2008) was enacted, removing a number of restrictions on the civic sector. In 2009 the Law Amending the Law on Societies (Law 22 of 2009) was passed in response to public criticisms that the 2008 law had not met civil society's aspirations for a wider margin of maneuver. Recently, there have been discussions about new draft amendments within the Ministry of Social Development but suggested changes have not yet been made public.

Civil society in Jordan can play a more substantive role in the Kingdom's reform and overall development process. However, it is handicapped by financial, organizational and contextual constraints; by high levels of internal fragmentation and dependence on foreign assistance; and by the concentration of the more capable organizations in Amman. Building the capacity of CSOs to design, implement, manage, monitor and evaluate their activities while supporting a more enabling environment in which they can operate will enhance the sector's ability to carry-out development and advocacy projects and to serve as a lever for positive change.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year activity with the objective of cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan by supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, CIS supports civic initiatives and advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of CSOs and promotes GOJ-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. CIS support includes grants to groups to advance programs that respond to citizens' demands and for thematic areas identified by USAID; institutional strengthening customized to individual CSO needs; coalition building; and facilitating dialogue between citizens and government.

CIS work plan activities are contained within three program components: Component I: Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; Component II: Capacity Building for Sustainability, and Component III: Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

Support to Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of democracy, human rights and governance, economic development, education, energy, environment, health and/or water are provided through:

- Sub-awards and technical assistance in support of Jordanian civic initiatives;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building support to CSOs at all levels including Jordanian intermediary support organizations;
- Targeted technical assistance to USAID implementing partner sub-award recipients from across the Mission's portfolio of programs;

- Enhancing the capacities of Government of Jordan staff at the Registry of Societies and other relevant Ministries that engage with civil society;
- Funding for research on the civil society sector; and
- Supporting opportunities for Government of Jordan-civil society dialogue.

Program interventions include:
- Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants
- Inclusive Development/Disability Rights Grants
- Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- Internal Strengthening for Change
- Partnerships for Jordan's Development
- Grants for Innovative Approaches in Engaging Students, Teachers, Communities & Parents to Combat Violence and Promote Social Justice
- Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

C. CIS RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND THEORY OF CHANGE
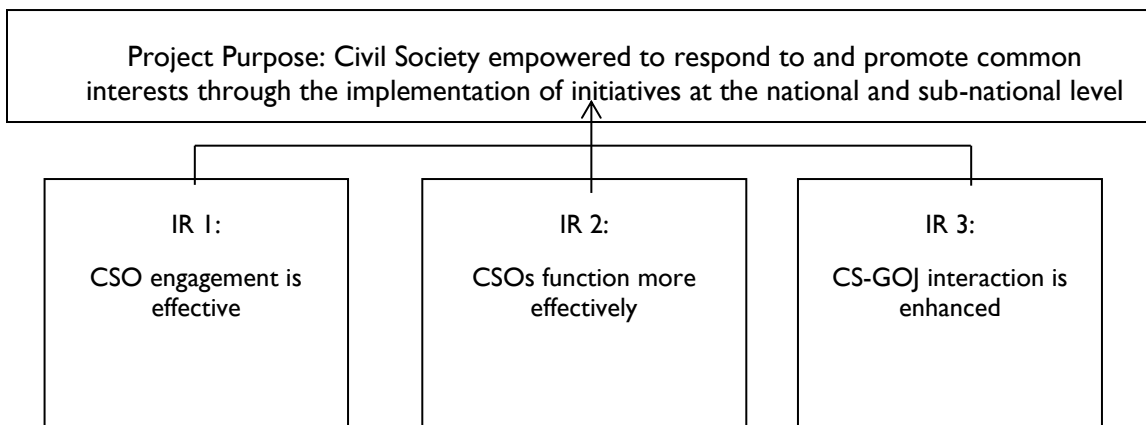
The CIS AMEP describes the activity theory of change as follows:

IF we invest in initiatives and advocacy related to common interests, increase the capacity of CSOs to implement those initiatives and promote constructive efforts for civil society and the GoJ to jointly address Jordanian challenges and reform, THEN civil society will be better skilled and more empowered to promote the common interests of Jordanians.

III.   ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The civil society assessment will address the following six questions. Particular emphasis will be placed on questions 2, 4, 5, and 6. Those six questions constitute the proposed outline for the assessment report. Question 6 will be addressed in a detailed conclusion and drives the entire exercise.

1. What is the current profile of the civil society sector in Jordan?

2. What are the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to six key national objectives?

    a. Social sector development
    b. Economic growth
    c. Improvements in service delivery
    d. Political reform
    e. Countering violent extremism
    f. Coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis

3. How have other donors engaged with civil society?

4. What are the primary sets of perceptions associated with civil society in Jordan?

5. What key challenges does civil society in Jordan confront today, and is likely to fact in the coming years, as it seeks to increase its contributions to national objectives? Conversely, into which opportunities can it tap, or should be able to take advantage of in the coming years, to further those same objectives?

6. What do the assessment's findings mean for USAID's programming in the civil society sector?

IV. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The proposed approach will proceed in three separate steps that build on each other.

Phase One: Foundation

Phase one will consist of the following four tasks:

- **Desk Review**: The assessment will identify, secure access to and review documents on, or directly relevant to, Jordanian civil society and its current environment.

- **Identification of Key Informants and Focus Group Participants:** Key informants and focus group participants will be identified and efforts to secure their participation will be made. The key informants and focus group participants will consist of a diverse group of civil society experts (including academics and journalists), CSO leaders and staff, GOJ officials (including at the governorate and municipal levels), parliamentarians, representatives of the donor community and Jordanian citizens.

- **Development of Guides for Informant Interviews and FGDs**: Questions will be based upon the assessment questions, but will vary depending on the identity of the informants and focus group participants. Questions asked to some informants or focus group participants may not be asked to others. The relative weight placed on each question may vary as well. Many questions will need to be cast slightly differently to take into account the identity of the informants or focus group. To reflect those differences, separate questionnaires will be developed for different

categories of respondents (government officials, civil society activists, civil society experts, general public). Interview guides will take into account the need to capture gender differentials. Answers will be gender disaggregated.

Sampling: The sampling plan will be designed to cover the various constituencies targeted by the assessment including government representatives, CSOs, and the general public. Government representatives will be selected from parliament, municipal councils and relevant Jordanian ministries. The selection of participating CSOs will depend on CSO population size, type and mandate of CSO and geographical region. The sample will cover CSOs from six governorates from the north, middle, and south of Jordan. A cross-section of men and women representing various age groups and geographical diversity will also be selected from the three regions of Jordan.

The six governorates selected to represent the north, middle and south of Jordan (two governorates for each of those three regions) are:

> North: Mafraq and Irbid
> South: Ma`an and Tafilah
> Center: Amman and Zarqa

Gender: All people-level questions will be gender disaggregated. The team will also identify the questions that will require examination of gender specific or gender differential effects.

Phase Two: Data Collection

- The data gathering process will begin with extensive interviews of CIS staff. These interviews will be spread over several two-hour sessions. In addition to CIS, the team will also communicate with Mission staff and other implementing partners such as NDI and CEP. During the first week the team will conduct interviews of the few donors with significant ongoing or recent civil society programming and/or knowledge of Jordanian civil society (e.g., European Union, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and Open Society Institute). Other informant interviews will focus on informants identified during Phase One. Those informants will in turn be a source of additional contacts that will be incorporated into the interview list.

- Planning for FGDs will be completed and the process of conducting FGDs to capture public perceptions will be pilot tested in Amman.

- FGDs will be conducted both in and outside Amman. Outside Amman, separate FGDs will involve the following constituencies: general public; members of municipal councils; civil society activists and leaders. Separate interviews with individual civil society leaders may also be conducted.

- Preliminary planning for the CIS evaluation will begin.

Phase Three: Analyze findings and Write Civil Society Assessment Report

Phase One research and Phase Two data collection findings will be processed and integrated into a civil society assessment report due on August 10.

V. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Given that the purpose of the evaluation is to provide specific guidance for CIS's work plan, the following questions are recommended in order of priority. It is anticipated that the assessment may bring to light some issues that can be explored in-depth through the evaluation. The questions may therefore be altered in light of the assessment findings.

1. How effective are CIS's grant mechanisms and programs in supporting CSOs' engagement in the following areas:[76]
    a. Advocacy interventions;
    b. Monitoring or advocacy work on human rights;
    c. Conducting outreach, community mobilization and civic engagement; and
    d. Targeting marginalized groups (youth, women, disabilities and hosting communities).

2. How do CIS's grant mechanisms differ in terms of their effectiveness in contributing to the program's purpose of empowering civil society to respond to and promote common interests through national and sub-national initiatives?

3. To what extent are common needs and priorities being addressed in projects funded by CIS grants?

4. To what extent have the various capacity building and technical assistance opportunities provided by CIS contributed to CSOs' ability to pursue their missions? What key capacity building and technical assistance gaps still need to be filled?

5. How effective have the governorate outreach activities of CIS's grants and capacity building program components been at recruiting new CSOs based outside Amman?

6. To what extent is the program enhancing interaction between civil society and GOJ? What gaps and opportunities exist on the way to a strengthened state-civil society engagement?

7. How did CIS address gender differential constraints in terms of accessing, participating in or benefiting from program activities?

VI. EVALUATION METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The evaluation will focus on CIS's grants mechanisms and capacity building interventions. It will pay less attention to the interaction between civil society and the GOJ, as the effects of CIS' intermittent activities under this component have not yet been demonstrated.

CIS reports supporting organizations as follows:
- 27 currently awarded under the Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- 7 under the Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants

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[76] Due to CIS's early stages of implementation, the evaluation question addresses the PMP's sub-IRs.

- 4 under the Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- 762 under the Internal Strengthening for Change
- 109 under the Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and CBOs

Evaluation methods will include the following:

- **Desk Review (Q1, Q2, Q5)**: An in-depth document review and desk research of all relevant CIS project documents and secondary data resources. Project documents available to the team will be provided by the AOR in collaboration with CIS staff.

- **Key Informant Interviews (Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6)**: In-depth interviews will be conducted with CIS grantees and unsuccessful applicants, USAID and GOJ representatives, CIS management staff, and sector specialists with first-hand knowledge of the program.

- **Focus Group Discussions (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5)**: To delve into specific issues, triangulate data, and solicit the input of CIS beneficiary CSOs, FGDs will be conducted with a wide range of beneficiary CSOs, as well as non-beneficiary civil society organizations working at the national and sub-national levels.

Sampling: Sample selection of direct and indirect beneficiaries will be statistically representative of CIS's various program interventions, including grant awards and capacity building activities. It will also include interviews with applicants who were not successful in receiving grants. Sample selection will take into consideration the distribution of funds across various program components.

Gender: All people-level questions will be gender disaggregated. The team will also identify the questions that require an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects.

VII.   **EXISTING ASSESSMENT RELATED AND PERFORMANCE INFORAMTION SOURCES**

- For the evaluation, USAID will provide the initial list of in-country contacts for the key informant interviews;

- The desk research and document review will include the following sources:
  a. CIS quarterly reports
  b. Project AMEP
  c. Project work plan
  d. Project fact sheets and special studies
  e. Grants files and training curricula
  f. USAID 2012 CSO Sustainability Index for the Middle East and North Africa
  g. Sheiwi, Dr. Musa.*The Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Political Reform in Jordan,* 2011
  h. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, *Map of the Political Parties and Movements in Jordan,* 2013-2014
  i. EU-Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Jordan, July 2010

j. Al-Urdun Al-Jadid.*The Contemporary Jordanian Civil Society: Characteristics, Challenges and Tasks,* 2010
k. USAID Jordan DG Assessment, 2011
l. Raei, Lamia. *Mapping of Non-Partisan Political and Social Groups in Jordan*, 2012
m. Booklet for the Classification of Societies According to Area of Specialization (2013)
n. *JNCW and CIDA, Women and Gender Programming in Jordan: A Map of NGO Work*
o. *Perceptions of Civil Society in Jordan: Key Findings from Focus Group Research, A Qualitative Research Brief,* July 2009
p. Jarrah, Sameer. *Civil Society and Public Freedom in Jordan: The Path of Democratic Reform,* 2009
q. Dajani, Rula. *Review of Women Networks, Unions and Coalitions in Jordan*, 2008

VIII.   DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

Assessment Activity	Timeline[77]
USAID in-brief	April 6
• Assessment and evaluation work plan • Assessment design report (design, methodology, work plan, instruments)	April 9-May 20
Assessment tool pilot testing	May 25-28
Assessment data collection	May 31-June 18
Assessment data analysis	June 21-30
Assessment PowerPoint presentation to USAID, draft assessment report	August 10
Evaluation design report (design methodology, work plan, instruments)	July 1-30
Evaluation tool pilot testing	August 1-6
Evaluation data collection	August 7-30
Evaluation data analysis	September 1-16
Evaluation PowerPoint presentation to USAID	October 15
Draft evaluation report	October 15

IX.   Team Composition

The assessment and evaluation will be conducted by one team.

In accordance with guidance provided in USAID ADS 203 the proposed evaluation team is composed of experts with significant knowledge of civil society in developing countries and in Jordan in particular, with skills and experience in the following areas:

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[77] The holy month of Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitir, which is a national holiday in Jordan, falls within the assessment/evaluation timeframe. In 2015 Ramadan will begin in mid-June and Eid will occur in mid-July.

- Experience in evaluation and assessment design methodologies;
- Experience implementing and conducting USAID assessments and evaluations;
- Expertise in Jordanian civil society;
- Experience in managing evaluations and assessments;
- Excellent writing and communication skills with experience in producing team-based, collaborative reports that are learning-oriented;
- Skills in qualitative data analysis;
- Local language skills; and
- Familiarity with USAID evaluation policy.

In order to meet the requirements of team composition, ensure data quality, and contribute to building capacity of local evaluation specialists, the following is suggested for team composition:

1. Team Leader/Senior Evaluation/Assessment Specialist
2. MENA Civil Society Specialist
3. Civil Society Sector Advisor (through local partner Integrated Solutions)
4. Quality Manager (through local partner Integrated Solutions)
5. MESP Senior M&E Advisor
6. MESP Technical Specialist

Proposed Team Members and Roles

1. Team Leader: Primary point of contact for assignment with responsibility for assigning team duties, managing activities, resources, and team member performance to meet objectives; leadership role in analysis, final reporting and presentation. Leads meetings with USAID; leads in creating design methodology and instruments; conducts literature review; participates in interviewing and data collection; assigns team activities and facilitates smooth team operations; ensures that findings, conclusions, and recommendations answer evaluation and assessment questions and meet USAID purposes; produces/finalizes evaluation tools and final report; ensures final reporting meets USAID evaluation requirements.

2. MENA Civil Society Specialist: Contributes to design methodology and data collection instruments; participates in pilot testing for data collection; participates in data analysis and interpretation; produces report sections as assigned by Team Lead. Ensures assessment and evaluation processes and reporting adhere to USAID requirements.

3. Civil Society Sector Advisor: Provides culturally and contextually relevant information about environment in which civil society operates. Contributes to design methodology and data collection instruments; participates in pilot testing for data collection and data collection efforts; participates in data analysis and interpretation; produces report sections as assigned by Team Lead. Ensures assessment and evaluation processes and reporting adhere to USAID requirements.

4. Quality Manager: Develops logistical plan, ensures data collection and data entry protocols are followed; ensures integrity of focus group transcripts and translation; participates in data collection.

Members of the team are all expected to sign statements confirming that there are no conflicts of interests with their working on the assessment and evaluation.

X.   PERFORMANCE PERIOD

The assessment and evaluation are expected to take place from mid-April to October 2015 with the final report submitted no later than October 30, 2015 so as to inform the design of CIS' work plan.

Logistics for the assessment and evaluation will be provided by MESP.

XI.   REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

- Reporting on the assessment and evaluation will be done separately;
- Information resulting from assessment will be a data source for the evaluation;
- Draft assessment and evaluation reports will be submitted excluding annexes and executive summaries;
- The length of the final assessment and evaluation reports will not exceed 25 pages each, consistent with USAID branding policy and exclusive of annexes and executive summaries;
- The reports will address each of the questions identified in the relevant sections of the SOW and any other factors the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the assessment or evaluation;
- All assessment and evaluation questions must be answered, and recommendations must be stated in an actionable way with defined responsibility for the action;
- Sources of information will be properly identified and listed in an annex;
- The assessment and evaluation reports must each include a table of contents, list of acronyms, and executive summary.
- The assessment and evaluation reports will be published on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse at edec.usaid.gov.
- Upon request from USAID or closure of MESP, both electronic and hard copy data files will be transferred to USAID. In the meantime, electronic files are on the MESP file and hard copies are warehoused at MESP.

Annex II: Design Report

Introduction

The primary USAID civil society program currently operating in Jordan is USAID's Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program, which will be entering its third year of operations in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region since the activity's inception and USAID's commitment to supporting the civil society sector, USAID has requested a civil society sector assessment and a project performance evaluation to inform CIS's third year workplan, which will be developed in October 2015.

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year activity with the objective of cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan by supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, CIS supports civic initiatives and advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of CSOs and promotes GOJ-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. CIS support includes grants to groups to advance programs that respond to citizens' demands and for thematic areas identified by USAID; institutional strengthening customized to individual CSO needs; coalition building; and facilitating dialogue between the civil society sector and government.

CIS workplan activities are contained within three program components: Component I: Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; Component II: Capacity Building for Sustainability, and Component III: Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

Support to Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of democracy, human rights and governance, economic development, education, energy, environment, health and/or water are provided through:
- Sub-awards and technical assistance in support of Jordanian civic initiatives;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building support to CSOs at all levels including Jordanian intermediary support organizations;
- Targeted technical assistance to USAID implementing partner sub-award recipients from across the Mission's portfolio of programs;
- Enhancing the capacities of Government of Jordan (GOJ) staff at the Registry of Societies and other relevant ministries that engage with civil society;
- Funding for research on the civil society sector; and
- Supporting opportunities for GOJ-civil society dialogue.

Program interventions include:
- Civic Initiatives Support Fund (CIS)
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants (DRG)
- Inclusive Development/Disability Rights Grants
- Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC)
- Partnerships for Jordan's Development
- Grants for Innovative Approaches in Engaging Students, Teachers, Communities & Parents to Combat Violence and Promote Social Justice
- Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): Off-the-Shelf Courses

The evaluation comes on the heels of a civil society sector assessment that has helped identify the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to key national objectives in Jordan; has shed light on perceptions of civil society by the general public, GOJ officials, and donors, as well as civil society's perceptions of GOJ officials and donors' engagement with civil society; and has zeroed-in on the challenges and opportunities faced by Jordan's civil society as it endeavors to increase its contributions to Jordan's development and reform process. The assessment identified intervention priorities for USAID's civil society programming, including but not limited to CIS.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide specific guidance for the CIS program. The evaluation will make practical and actionable recommendations for the next CIS workplan that will be developed in October 2015. Recommendations will include those for component continuation, modifications, and potential future programming for civil society.

The CIS performance evaluation questions originally agreed upon with USAID in late April 2015 have been refined following the assessment to reflect discussions held with the CIS program staff. Discussions centered on identifying an approach to program evaluation that can inform CIS's workplan and provide maximum utility for both USAID and CIS. The four evaluation questions agreed upon constitute the proposed outline for the evaluation report. The evaluation questions are as follows:

Question 1: *How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms and design, awarding processes, and grant-management systems in supporting:*

1. *National and sub-national civic initiatives;*
2. *Organizational development;*
3. *Improved service-delivery capacity; and*
4. *Advocacy development.*

The evaluation will take into account the extent to which the approach followed by CIS a) *was sensitive to and addressed gender differentials and/or gaps*; and b) *ensured relevant capacity development in the governorates* (including support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

Elaboration
   a. An effective intervention is defined here as one that meets two criteria: responsiveness and congruence. It must be *responsive* to the needs of the civic initiative it seeks to support and *congruent* with the distinct profile of the recipient CSO (or CSOs) and the environment in which the latter operates.
   b. The "mechanisms" above refer to two types of grants: APS and thematic. The evaluation will seek to assess the relative effectiveness of each. It will zero-in on whether grant-making is generally the most effective means of supporting civic initiatives.
   c. "Organizational development" is defined here as encompassing:
      – Management systems: Management of financial resources; management of operations; and management of staff/volunteers.
      – External relations: Relations with constituencies; relations with the media and the public; and relations with other CSOs.
   d. Advocacy development is defined as follows:
      – Improved understanding of why advocacy matters to a CSO's ability to achieve its objectives, and enhanced readiness to engage in it.

–   Stronger capacity to advocate (by the targeted CSO as a whole and by its individual staff members).

Question 2: *How effective is the capacity building/technical assistance delivery component of CIS in supporting:*
1. *National and sub-national civic initiatives;*
2. *Organizational development;*
3. *Improved service delivery capacity; and*
4. *Advocacy development.*

The evaluation will take into account the extent to which the approach followed by CIS a) *was sensitive to and addressed gender differentials and/or gaps*; and b) *ensured relevant capacity development in the governorates* (including by providing needed support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

Question 3: *To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GOJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders?*

Elaboration

The question will focus on the following components:
*   How can CIS *enhance the readiness and capacity of both the GOJ and civil society to engage with each other to address development and reform challenges*?
*   Through both its grant-making and capacity-building components, is CIS *creating meaningful opportunities for GoJ-civil society dialogue*, especially to address development and reform challenges? What is the relative effectiveness of each component in this regard?

Question 4: *Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the civil society assessment, remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations might need to be made to each? And which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior project activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?*

Elaboration

The answer to this question will draw heavily on, and synthesize the content of, the answers to the previous questions. Potential assistance gaps, opportunities and course corrections will fall into two main categories: those that relate to CIS's direct engagement with CSOs and those that pertain to strengthening state-civil society interaction. The evaluation will be sensitive to potential gender differentials and gaps, and to the need to ensure relevant capacity development in the governorates (including by providing needed support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

Evaluation Design

The evaluation will employ a qualitative approach to answer the evaluation questions.   The methodology will rely on focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews (KIIs) to facilitate a deep understanding of how effective the CIS program has been in supporting civil society organizations to play a more visible, effective and consequential role in Jordan's development and reform process capturing the nuances in individual cases and perspectives.

To inform the evaluation design and its implementation, the evaluation team employed a participatory planning approach that included CIS staff and their input into evaluation questions and approach in order to maximize utility for CIS' work planning. In light of these participatory consultations, the evaluation

will focus on four of CIS' seven original program interventions that were selected based upon the following criteria:

- The size of funding (relative to overall program budget);
- The number of CSOs that received assistance under the program; and
- Whether or not implemented interventions had demonstrable results.

The four program interventions selected are as follows:

Grant-making interventions

- The Civic Initiatives Support Fund (the best-funded program intervention thus far with approximately $8 million out of $20 million spent to date).
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance grants (over $3 million).

Institutional strengthening/Capacity building interventions:

- Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) with well over 700 beneficiaries to date.
- Demand-Driven Off-the-Shelf Courses.

In order to answer the evaluation questions, the following stakeholders and groups will be consulted:

- CIS staff
- CIS grantees and capacity building beneficiaries
- CIS intermediary organizations
- Rejected applicants
- Government officials
- Civil society experts
- Civil society activists (including at national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs))

Data Collection Methods

In addition to a comprehensive desk review, data collection methods will include focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews.

The focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews will be guided by semi-structured questionnaires covering the evaluation topics; interview guides have been tailored to each of the six stakeholder clusters: grantees of the CIS Fund, DRG grantees, ISC grantees, participants in the Off-the-Shelf Courses for CSOs and CBOs, government officials and civil society experts and activists and rejected applicants. Each interview guide contains an average of nine questions that are intended to preserve the potential for a relatively free-flowing conversation, while creating a standardized format to facilitate a reliable, comparative analysis of data. Questions are based on the evaluation's overarching questions, but vary depending upon the identity of the interviewees. Questions asked of some interviewees may not be asked to others; relative importance of questions varies by the type of stakeholder.

Interview guides were designed to take into account the need to capture gender differentials. Answers will be gender disaggregated.

Literature Review
Documentation and reports reviewed in the process of this evaluation included the following:

1. Year I Workplan

2. Year II Workplan
3. CIS Performance Management Plan (PMP)
4. Summary Version of Final Approved Proposal
5. CIS quarterly reports
6. CIS monthly reports
7. Project fact sheets and special studies
8. Grants files and training curricula
9. ISC Assessment Presentation
10. ISC Assessment Focus Group Discussions

Key Informant Interviews

Fourteen interviews will be conducted with key informants drawn from government and civil society experts and activists. Interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of the sector, their affiliation with it through their professional experience, and/or their familiarity with the CIS program. The key informants consist of a group of civil society experts (including academics and journalists), GOJ officials (including at the governorate and municipal levels), and civil society activists.

Focus Group Discussions

Twenty-two focus groups will be conducted with the following groups:
- 4 focus groups with rejected applicants (3 CIS and 1 DRG)
- 6 focus groups with participants in the Off-the-Shelf courses
- 12 focus groups with ISC beneficiaries

Group Interviews

Twenty-six group interviews will be conducted with the following groups:

- 19 group interviews with CIS grantees
- 7 group interviews with DRG grantees

The focus groups and group interviews will consist of both female and male participants. The recruitment criteria will require having as even a male to female ratio as possible.

Table 1 below lists the data collection methods used in answering the evaluation questions.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods					
Evaluation Questions		**Data Collection Methods**			
		Group Interviews	**Focus Groups**	**KII**	**Desk Review**
1	How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms and design, awarding processes, and grant-management systems in supporting: 1. National and sub-national civic initiatives; 2. Organizational development; 3. Improved service-delivery capacity; and 4. Advocacy development.	x	x	x	x

2	How effective is the capacity building/technical assistance delivery component of CIS in supporting: 1. National and sub-national civic initiatives; 2. Organizational development; 3. Improved service delivery capacity; and 4. Advocacy development.	x	x	x	x
3	To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GOJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders?	x	x	x	
4	Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the civil society assessment, remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations might need to be made to each? And which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior project activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?	x	x	x	

Sampling Plan

The sampling of respondents targeted for the evaluation is based upon the stakeholder type with a focus on four CIS program interventions:
- The Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Grants
- Internal Strengthening for Change
- Capacity Building Open Courses

Nineteen Round I CIS grantees (out of 28 grantees) were selected to represent all governorates in which Round I of the program is being implemented and to cover all CDCS themes supported by CIS. The sample was selected randomly within each geographic location, and constructed to ensure coverage of both registered CSOs and informal groups working on civic initiatives.

All seven DRG grantees will be interviewed, as this component receives significant funding relative to overall program budget.

Fourteen government officials and civil society experts were selected for interview based on their familiarity of the program and/or knowledge of civil society. The group includes the three intermediary organizations through which the CIS ISC program component is delivered to various CBOs.
Three of the four focus groups to be held with rejected applicants will specifically target applicants for CIS grants while one focus group will concentrate on applicants to the DRG grants. The three focus groups with rejected CIS applicants will cover the governorates as follows:

- One focus group to cover Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash and Ajloun in the North;
- One focus group to cover Amman, Zarqa Balqa and Madaba in the center; and
- One focus group to cover Maan, Karak, Tafileh and Aqaba in the South.

The focus group with the applicants to the DRG grants will cover Amman only as the majority of applicants and therefore rejected applicants were from the capital.

Focus groups with participants in the Off-the-Shelf Courses will include two focus groups from each of the following regions as follows:

- North
  - Irbid
  - Mafraq

- Center
  - Amman
  - Jerash, Zarqa, Ajloun and Madaba

- South
  - Ma'an
  - Tafileh and Aqaba

Twelve focus groups will be held with CBOs that have benefited from Round I and II of the ISC program. Organizations were selected from Karak, Tafileh, Madaba, Zarqa, Ma'an, Irbid, Aqaba, Balqa, Mafraq, and Amman, representing all governorates in which the program is implemented.

In addition, six focus groups will be conducted with CSOs that have participated in CIS's open courses. The selection of these organizations was based on three factors:
- Subject area of courses
- Male/female ratio
- Regional distribution of governorates

The team will seek to meet with the actual trainees who attended training. In the case that they have left the organization, the team will invite the head of the CSO to participate in the focus group discussions.

A snowball methodology will be used to identify additional informants and organizations as findings emerge that require further investigation. If informants and organizations are unavailable, replacement organizations matching the original sampling criteria will be identified using the same methodology.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis will be structured by the evaluation's primary questions and sub-questions. Preliminary data analysis will commence as patterns and themes emerge. Theme frequencies will be compared and frequency co-occurrence among stakeholder clusters will be recorded and analyzed to establish relationships between the emerging themes.

Data collected through qualitative methods will be triangulated for each question, e.g., information collected from interviews with government officials will be compared to responses of CIS grantees working on the engagement of government, and validated with civil society experts.

Annex III: Summary of KIIs and FGD

Conducted by the Assessment Team
(May 25 – June 20)

Table 1: List of KIIs

Organization	No. of Interviews
Government	19
Parliamentarians and Former Parliamentarians	4
Civil Society Organizations	31
Civil Society Experts	7
Donors	4
USAID Implementing Partners	8
Total	**73**

Table 2: List of FGDs

Category	Type	Governorate	Total no. of participants	No. of Females	No. of Males
Ana Usharek	NDI University program	Amman	7	5	2
Media	Journalists covering civil society	Amman	3	2	1
Municipal council		Zarqa	7	2	5
		Maan	3	1	2
		Mafraq	9	0	9
CBOs	Received funding	Amman	10	1	9
		Irbid	11	3	8
		Tafileh	5	5	0
Not funded CBOs	Did not receive funding	Amman	12	3	9
		Irbid	10	1	9
		Tafileh	6	2	4
Jordanian citizens	Females (40-60 years old)	Amman	5	5	0
	Females (18-39 years old)	Irbid	15	15	0
	Males (40-60 years old)	Zarqa	8	0	8
	Males (18-39 years old)	Maan	8	0	8
	Females (40-60 years old)	Tafileh	10	10	0
	Males (18-39 years old)	Mafraq	9	0	9
Total		**17 FGDs**	**138**	**55**	**83**

Annex IV: List of Key Informants and FG Participants

No	KIIs	Organization	Title	Phone no.	Date
Government Representatives					
1	Maha Tarawneh/Mohammed Adayleh	Ministry of Planning		4644466 799526516	5/18/2015
2	Mohammad Hammad	Ministry of Social Development		5679327	5/20/2015
3	Basel Tarawneh	Prime Ministry		4641211 0798525485 0779557375	5/27/2015
4	Eng. Saad Shihab	Governorate of Irbid	Governor of Irbid	27242225	5/28/2015
5	Eng. Hussein Bani Hani	Mayor of Irbid	Mayor	0799127012 27242225	5/28/2015
6	Dr. Amal Il-Nahas	Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities	Director	5538610 ext 213	5/28/2015
7	Dr. Ahmad Abu Haidar	Ministry of Social Development		5679327	6/1/2015
8	Kholoud Chicakho Mohammad Majali	Ministry of Political Development		5501200	6/1/2015
9	Majed Fawaz	Mayor of Ma'an	Mayor	03 2132106 03 2133026 0777303332	6/2/2015
10	Dr. Faris Breizat	Royal Hashemite Court		4637341	6/7/2015
11	Ahmad Rousan	Ministry of Environment		5560113 0798291176	6/7/2015
12	Eng. Nancy Abu Haiani Dr. Faheb Biarri	Municipality of Amman	Director of Social Programs Deputy City Manager of Social Development	798165322	6/7/2015

13	Dima Khleifat	National Registry of Societies Ministry of Social Development		5679327	6/8/2015
14	Ghassan Tanash	Ministry of Culture		5696218 0799055380	6/8/2015
15	Nisreen Zrieqat	National Center for Human Rights		5932257 5920396 0777671000	6/10/2015
16	Eng. Khaled Hunaifat	Municipality of Taifleh	Mayor	03-2242266 0799060609 Um Mutasem: 0775512934	6/15/2015
17	Adnan Ghabashneh	MOSD- East Amman Directorate	Director	4745129 0798518231	6/16/2015
18	Raed Kafaween	MOSD- Jerash Directorate	Director	02-6354645 0798518238	6/16/2015
19	Amer Hiasat	MOSD- West Amman Directorate	Director	4657825 0798518229	6/17/2015
Parliamentarians and Former Parliamentarians					
20	Wafaa Bani Mustafa	Parliament	Member of the Parliament	777442911	5/20/2015
21	Bassam Haddadin	Parliament	Member of the Parliament	795557070	6/1/2015
22	Jamil Nimri	Parliment	Member of the Parliment	777488048	6/3/2015
23	Dr. Muhannad Alazzah	Senate	Senator	795082144	6/3/2015
24	Dr. Manal Tahtamouni	Institute of Family Health	Director	5344193 0796664559	5/19/2015
25	Enam Barrishi	Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS)	Director General	5541899	5/20/2015
26	Nidal Mansour	Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)	CEO	5160820 0795858868	5/21/2015
27	Rafah Mango	Justice Center for Legal Aid (JCLA)	Project Manager	4624009	5/21/2015

28	Faisal Abu Sondos	Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan	General Manager	5676 173	5/24/2015
29	Nadia Shamroukh	Jordanian Women's Union (JWU)	General Manager	5687037 0797330103	5/26/2015
30	Dr. Aida Essaid	King Hussein Foundation	Director	5606010	5/26/2015
31	Ala'a Abdullah	Jordan Green Building Council (or RSCN)	Deputy Executive Director	5520893	5/27/2015
32	Daoud Kuttab	Ammannet	General Manager	4645486	5/27/2015
33	Bassam Anis	Jordan Association for Family Planning and Protection	Vice Executive Manager	5160999	5/27/2015
34	Yara Abdelsamad	EDAMA	CEO	5810717	5/27/2015
35	Khaled Hudhud	INTAJ	CEO	5812013 0788002900	5/27/2015
36	Dr. Salma Al-Nims	The Jordanian National Commission for Women	Secretary General	5560741	6/1/2015
37	Muna Abdel Jawad	Rights and Development Center	Co-founder	795678979	6/1/2015
38	Dr. Abdelraheem Abul-Basal	Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship	CEO	5154892	6/11/2015
39	Talal Qudah	Waqe3 for Community Development	President	777358763	6/1/2015
40	Dr. Amer Bani Amer	Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development	Founder and General Director	5377330	6/2/2015
41	Omar Zboon	General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS)	Project Manager	5370005	6/2/2015
42	Reem Arida	King Hussein Foundation/Noor Al-Hussein Foundation	Fundraising Manager	795383156	6/3/2015

43	Linda Kalash	Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights	General Manager	5671729 796404406	6/3/2015
44	Raja Hiyari	Partners Jordan	Executive Director	5857187	6/3/2015
45	Mohammad Al Jaree	Al-Thoria Center for Studies	General Manager	5694936	6/3/2015
46	Hanna Zaghloul	Kawar Group	CEO	5609500 0795555777	6/3/2015
47	Dana Dajani	Jordan River Foundation	Deputy CEO	5933211	6/9/2015
48	Maali Qasem	Schema & Jordan Institute of Directors	CEO	5866448	6/7/2015
49	Qais Tarawneh	JOHUD	Director of Social Support	5052431	6/7/2015
50	Mohammad Hussainy	Identity Center	Director	565 5856	6/7/2015
51	Eyad Al Jaber	I Dare for Sustainable Development	Projects Director	5679803	6/8/2015
52	Dr. Oraib Rantawi	Al-Quds Center for Political Studies	General Director	0795766350 5633080	6/10/2015
53	Laila Naffa	Arab Women Organization	Program Director	4650414 0795519522	6/11/2015
54	Dr. Jamil Alduhaisat and Fawaz AlMathraa'wi	Islamic Center Charity Society	Chairman	5101010 ext 41423 Fawaz: 0795054944	6/17/2015
55	Dr. Khaled Al-Wazani	Issnaad Consulting	CEO	5544420 0777444000	5/19/2015
56	Dima Jweihan	The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law	Executive Director	5548158	5/27/2015
57	Nancy Fasho	CSO legal expert		795502896	5/27/2015
58	Dalia Zueiter	Open Society Foundation		5827395	6/2/2015
59	Saed Karajeh	Karajah and Associates Law Firm	Managing Partner	5620507	6/2/2015

60	Fadi al Qadi		Human Rights and Media Expert	796992396	6/17/2015
61	Hala Ghosheh			777362007	6/24/2015

Donors

62	Ruba Matarneh	MEPI	Development& Educational professional Coordinator	5906000	5/27/2015
63	Lina Baj	Embassy of Netherlands	Human Rights Fund and Good Governance and Matra South Program	5902223	5/28/2015
64	Victoria Wickenden	Arab Partnership/British Embassy		4603420	6/4/2015
65	Lazhar Aloui	Support to Civil Society, Dialogue & Participation	Team Leader	079 087 3286	6/8/2015

USAID Implementing Partners

66	CIS team	Civic Initiatives Support Project			5/31/2015 6/11/2015
67	Ramsey Day	IRI	Country Director	5541800	6/2/2015
68	Rashad Bibars	USAID Local Enterprise Support Project (LENS)	DCOP	079 083 0198	6/2/2015
69	Ms. Huda Khayme	JCAP	DCOP	5859179	6/3/2015
70	Mina Day	CEP	COP	772440440	6/3/2015
71	Dr. Wisam Rabadi	Jordan Competitiveness Program	COP	791047576	6/4/2015
72	Arianit Shehu	NDI	Country Director	4612527	6/8/2015
73	Nermeen Murad	Takamol	COP	790101545	6/10/2015

Annex V: Short Bibliography

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Annex VI: Workplan

Description	Deliverable	Responsible	Timeline (Prelim.)
Assessment – Inception phase			
USAID Deliverable – In-Briefing	• In-Briefing	USAID Team Leader Evaluators MESP	April 6
USAID Deliverable - Workplan submitted to USAID for approval	• Workplan/schedule	Team Leader MESP	April 9
Desk review of the existing documents	• Desk review & gap analysis	Team Leader Evaluators	April 16-23
Development of the assessment instruments for CSOs, general public, civil society experts, and government	• Draft instruments	Team Leader Evaluators	April 19- 30
Develop Assessment Design Report (including methodological approach and instruments to be used)	• Draft Assessment Design Report to MSI/MESP	Team Leader Evaluators	April 30-May 5
USAID Deliverable – Assessment Design Report submitted for USAID for approval	• Design Document submitted with draft instruments	Team Leader MESP	May 20
Logistics (arranging meetings/interviews/ recruitment/translation)	• Logistics plan	Assessment Team	April 27 - May 10
Conduct pilot testing for data collection	• Piloting completed • Final instruments	Team Leader Evaluators	May 23- 26
Assessment – Implementation			
Conduct field work	• In-depth interview notes • FG Discussion notes/transcripts	Team Leader Evaluators Quality Assurance Manager	May 27 – June 18
Data analysis	• Draft outline of major findings and conclusions	Team Leader Evaluators	June 21-30
USAID Deliverable - De-briefing of findings to USAID	• PowerPoint presentation	Team Leader	Aug 11
Assessment – Report			

Description	Deliverable	Responsible	Timeline (Prelim.)
Drafting assessment report	• Draft assessment report	Team Leader Evaluators	Aug 5
USAID Deliverable - Draft Assessment Report Submitted	• Draft assessment report	MESP	Aug 11
Review of Draft Assessment Report by USAID		USAID	Per USAID
Final assessment report *incorporating USAID comments*	• Final assessment report	Team Leader	7 days after receipt
USAID Deliverable – Final Assessment Report	• Final assessment Report	MESP	10 days after receipt

Annex VII: Discussion Guides
Interview Guide for Mayors and Municipal Council (MC) Members
(FGDs for MC Members & One-on-One Interviews for Mayors)

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions. Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As you know, USAID is supporting a wide range of projects and activities carried out by civil society organizations in Jordan. It is also providing those civil society organizations with technical assistance to help them become more effective in planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring their activities.

As part of its own planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan. The purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective; that it maximizes the benefits to the Jordanian population at large; and that it takes advantage of potential opportunities for mutually advantageous partnerships between GOJ entities, including of course municipalities, and civil society organizations.

So, what we are trying to evaluate are the strengths and weaknesses of civil society, its accomplishments but also its shortcomings, and how civil society organizations might be able to increase their contributions to key developmental objectives for the kingdom. We also are trying to get a better sense of how civil society in Jordan is perceived – including by the general public and by government officials, such as yourself (yourselves). We want these perceptions to be accurately reflected in our study, so that they can be taken into account when USAID designs its assistance projects to Jordanian civil society organizations.

Your answers will be kept confidential; the report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. All we are trying to do is merely capture a variety of opinions and perspectives on Jordanian civil society. We then will review everything we have heard, and we summarize it in a brief report that will be given to USAID. USAID then will use that report to inform and guide the various civil society projects and activities it supports.

Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. If you feel comfortable with this approach, I am planning to ask you 11 questions, a few of which entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us?

Questions

Question 1. When you hear the expression "civil society," what does it mean to you, as a mayor/ municipal council member?

Question 2. When you hear the expression "civil society," which impressions first come to your mind? Do you have a rather favorable or rather unfavorable impression of civil society? Why?

Question 3. When you think about your city, which civil society organizations stand out in your mind and why? How did you come to know, or know of, these organizations?

Question 4. Can you provide examples of the ways in which your municipality has engaged with civil society organizations? Were these efforts successful, or rather unsuccessful, and why?

Question 5. In the past three years, has the municipal council become more engaged with civil society organizations, less engaged, or has engagement remained about the same?
[Follow-up questions: Why has there been less engagement or not more engagement? (Or: Why has engagement increased?) Has the quality of engagement improved or decreased? How? Why? Can you provide specific examples?]

Question 6. In which main areas, if any, have civil society organizations made substantive contributions to public life in your city? Can you provide specific examples of those contributions?

Question 7. In addition to what we have discussed already, what other roles would you like civil society to play in your community?
[Follow-up question: How can civil society better support you as a Mayor/local council member, and how can it better support your community?

Question 8. In your opinion, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of civil society organizations in your city? Can you provide specific illustrations of those strengths and weaknesses?

Question 9. Many analysts argue that civil society has little impact, if any, on government policies and decisions. From your perspective as a mayor / municipal council member, do you think that that assessment is accurate? Why/why not, and can you provide a few relevant illustrations?

Question 10. Do you expect that decentralization and the new municipalities law will have any meaningful impact on CBOs and their role in local development and local decision-making?

[Follow-up question (if necessary): ask about specific anticipated impacts; or why impact is not expected to be substantive]

Question 11. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in your city than you were four or five years ago? Why?

Interview Guide for Civil Society Activists
(FGDs & Informant Interviews)

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions. Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan.
- We are trying to map the sector, but we also are trying to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society as a whole and the nature and extent of its contributions to the kingdom's

developmental goals. We would like to pinpoint what stands in the way of making those contributions more significant and how those obstacles might be overcome.

- We are also looking into civil society's engagement with GOJ entities as well as donors' engagement with civil society organizations.
- Finally, we are trying to get a better sense of how the civil society sector in Jordan is perceived – by the general public, by government officials, by donors, by those in the media who cover civil society, and by civil society activists themselves. We want these perceptions to be accurately reflected in our study, so that they can be taken into account when USAID designs its assistance projects to Jordanian civil society.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective, and that it maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

I should underscore that your answers will be kept confidential. The report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. I am planning to ask you 19 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us?

Questions

Question 1. What do you believe the role of civil society should be in Jordan, and how close do you think Jordanian civil society actually comes to playing that role?

Question 2. What do you view as the main strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society today, and its main accomplishments and failures thus far?

[Follow up question: Do these strengths and weaknesses differ depending on whether one is looking at CBOs or NGOs, or across governorates and sectors?

Question 3. What are your organization's main skill gaps? What is preventing your organization from growing and achieving its strategic objectives?

Question 4. In your opinion, what are the three main obstacles that currently face CSOs in Jordan? Can you provide specific examples of how these obstacles play themselves out, drawing on your own experience?

Question 5. Are there challenges to organizational development and activity implementation that disproportionately affect women-led organizations?

[Follow-up question (if answer to question above is yes): What are they and what causes them?

Question 6. Do you think that overall the GOJ plays a rather helpful or rather unhelpful role when it comes to enabling civil society activity? Why? Can you provide examples?

[Follow-up question: Do you think the government feels accountable to civil society? Why/why not?]

[Follow-up question: Do you expect decentralization will enhance government accountability to CSOs and the role that civil society can play in local development and local decision-making? Why/why not? How?]

Question 7. Are there differences in the relationship between the GOJ and civil society depending on whether one looks at the national level or the local level? If so, what are these differences, and what in your opinion accounts for them?

Question 8. What do you consider to be the best example (or best examples) of successful civil society engagement with the GOJ? In your opinion, what made this example (or examples) a success?

[Follow-up question: How can advocacy by CSOs at the national level be linked more effectively to civil society activities at the level of the different governorates?]

Question 9. What do you consider to be the best example or examples of alliances and coalitions between civil society organizations? What made them successful?

[Follow-up question: Is there an increasing or decreasing trend amongst CSOs towards networking on policy issues? What impedes coordination between organizations?]

Question 10. How would you describe CSOs' impact on public policy in Jordan? Is it substantial, limited, or very limited? What is the basis for your answer?

Question 11. Building on your answer to the previous question, what do you view as the two most significant constraints on CSO's ability to have a larger impact on public policy and public life in Jordan?

[Follow-up question: Can you provide specific examples of how these constraints limit civil society's influence on public policy and public life?]

Question 12. How do you think the general public perceives CSOs in Jordan, and why do you think people view civil society that way?

[Follow-up question: Do you think those perceptions are accurate and justified, fair or unfair? Why? In your opinion, what factors or which institutions play a critical role in shaping public perceptions of civil society?]

Question 13. What are the challenges in securing local funding? How can the private sector be encouraged to support the agenda and activities of civil society?

Question 14. How would you describe the coverage of civil society by Jordanian media (well-informed/not well-informed; objective/biased; accurate/misleading; fair/unfair)? Can you provide specific examples to support your answer?

Question 15. In your opinion, has donor programming left important gaps in assistance to CSO, or, conversely, have donors paid too much attention to some sectors or some types of activities? If so, which ones? Can you provide specific examples?

Question 16. In your opinion, what has been the most positive result or impact of donors' engagement with Jordanian civil society to date? And what has been the most negative one?

Question 17. If you had to suggest <u>one</u> change in how donors go about supporting Jordanian civil society, what would it be?

Question 18. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in Jordan than you were four or five years ago, and why?

Question 19. How do you think current events in the region will affect civil society's role in Jordan?

Interview Guide for Civil Society Experts
(FGDs & Informant Interviews)

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions. Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan.

- We are trying to map this sector, but we also are trying to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society as a whole and the nature and extent of its contributions to the kingdom's developmental goals. We would like to pinpoint what stands in the way of making those contributions more significant and how those obstacles might be overcome.
- We are also looking into civil society's engagement with GOJ entities as well as donors' engagement with civil society organizations.
- Finally, we are trying to get a better sense of how the civil society sector in Jordan is <u>perceived</u> – by the general public, by government officials, by donors, by those in the media who cover civil society, and by civil society activists themselves.

I should underscore that your answers will be kept confidential. The report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or to any particular group of respondents. Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. And if you are comfortable with this approach, I am planning to ask you <u>15 questions</u>, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us? *[Interviewer/Moderator: It may be possible and even advisable to move quickly through the first few questions, which provide different "entry points" to gauge respondents' perceptions of civil society, its strengths and limitations. Questions are sometimes closely related, but not repetitive, and they therefore provide means of getting at the nuances of respondents' opinions.]*

Questions

Question 1. What do you believe should be the role of civil society in Jordan, and how close do you think Jordanian civil society actually comes to playing that role?

Question 2. What do you view as the main strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society today, and its main accomplishments and failures thus far?

[Follow-up question: Do these strengths and weaknesses differ depending on whether one is looking at CBOs or NGOs, or across governorates and sectors?

[Follow-up question: What are the main skill gaps the sector needs to fill?

Question 3. (If not already captured through responses to previous questions.) How would you summarize the overall performance of Jordan's civil society – strong, weak, very weak, adequate, problematic, or through some other adjectives -- and why would you rate it that way.

Question 4. Are there challenges to organizational development and activity implementation that disproportionately affect women-led organizations?
[Follow-up question (if answer to question above is yes): What are they and what causes them?

Question 5. Building on the previous questions, I'd like you to consider five sets of national objectives for Jordan, and I'd be grateful if you could tell me how you would assess the performance of civil society in each area, and why you assess it that way. Those five sets of objectives are:
   a) Addressing social problems such as poverty and unemployment
   b) Improving the population's access to basic services
   c) Political reform
   d) Fighting extremist ideas and violence and promoting tolerance and social cohesion
   e) Helping Jordan cope with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis

[*Note: this will need restating each objective and asking for the answer to the question -- as in "So, first, addressing social problems …"*]

Question 6. How would you describe the coverage of civil society by Jordanian media (well-informed/not well-informed; objective/biased; accurate/misleading; fair/unfair)? Can you provide specific examples?

Question 7. What are your views regarding the assistance that donors have extended to the civil society sector in Jordan?

[Follow-up questions, if not already covered in respondent's comments:
   a) How much of an impact, and what kind of impact, has donor funding had?
   b) Has donor programming left important gaps in assistance to CSOs, or, conversely, have donors paid too much attention to some sectors or some types of activities? If so which ones?
   c) Has donor funding for civil society had negative consequences? Which ones? Can you provide a specific example?]

Question 8. How would you describe the relationship between the GOJ and Jordanian civil society, and in your opinion what accounts for the nature of that relationship?
[Follow-up question: Do you think that overall the GOJ plays a rather helpful or rather unhelpful role when it comes to enabling civil society activity? Why? Can you provide examples?]

Question 9. What do you consider to be the best example or examples of successful civil society engagement with the GOJ?

Question 10. What do you view as the two most significant constraints on CSOs' ability to have a larger impact on public policy and public life?]

Question 11. The GOJ has repeatedly indicated that it wants to engage with civil society on development issues and on broader decision-making at the local and national levels alike. Based on your experience and observations, how committed do you believe the GOJ is to that objective?
   a) Very committed
   b) Somewhat committed
   c) Not very committed
   d) Not committed at all

[Follow-up question: Can you explain why you evaluated the GOJ's commitment as you did?]
[Follow-up question: The GOJ's commitment to engaging with civil society being what it is, how can civil society advocacy be effective, and at which stage of the public policy making process can NGOs have the most impact?

Question 12. A new Societies law draft is at the Legislation and Opinion Bureau. Do you expect the new law to be more restrictive, and, if so, in which respects?

[Follow-up questions: Which specific impacts do you anticipate this law will have on civil society activity?]

[Follow-up question: What, if anything, can civil society do to improve its relationship with government, or to help create a regulatory context more conducive to civil society activity?]

Question 13. Do you think that decentralization and the new municipalities' law will enhance the role that CBOs play in local development decision-making? Why/Why not?

[Follow-up question: What could enhance that role?]

Question 14. How do you think current events in the region will affect civil society's role in Jordan?

Question 15. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in Jordan than you were four or five years ago, and why?

Interview Guide for Donors

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions. Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan.

- We are trying to map this sector, but we also are trying to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society as a whole and the nature and extent of its contributions to the kingdom's developmental goals. We would like to pinpoint what stands in the way of making those contributions more significant and how those obstacles might be overcome.
- We also are looking into civil society's engagement with GOJ entities as well as donors' engagement with civil society organizations.
- Finally, we also are trying to get a better sense of how the civil society sector in Jordan is <u>perceived</u> – by the general public, by government officials, by donors, by those in the media who cover civil society, and by civil society activists themselves.

I should underscore that your answers will be kept confidential. The report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. And if you are comfortable with this approach, I am planning to ask you <u>14 questions</u>, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us?

Questions

Question 1. Overall, what do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society today? What do you consider to be its main accomplishments but also the key areas in which it has failed?

[Follow-up, if needed, to refocus respondent: "Main strengths?" "Main weaknesses?" "Primary accomplishments to date?" "Key areas in which civil society has failed?"]

[Follow-up question: Do these strengths and weaknesses differ depending on whether one is looking at CBOs or NGOs, or across governorates and sectors?]

Question 2. How would you rate the overall performance of Jordanian civil society to date – strong, weak, adequate, problematic, or in some other way – and why would you rate it that way?

Question 3. Are there challenges to organizational development and activity implementation that disproportionately affect women-led organizations?

[Follow-up question (if answer to question above is yes): What are they and what causes them?]

Question 4. Building on the previous questions, I'd like you to consider five sets of national objectives for Jordan, and I'd be grateful if you could tell me how you would assess the performance of civil society in each area, and why you assess it that way. Those five sets of objectives are:
  a) Addressing social problems such as poverty and unemployment
  b) Improving the population's access to basic services
  c) Political reform
  d) Fighting extremist ideas and violence and promoting tolerance and social cohesion
  e) Helping Jordan cope with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis

[*Note: this will need restating each objective and asking for the answer to the question -- as in "So, first, addressing social problems …"*]

Question 5. Based on your experience, how would you describe and evaluate donors' engagement with Jordanian civil society in the past decade? For instance, we would be interested in your view regarding the nature and quality of that engagement, some of its distinctive features, the merits and shortcomings of the approaches of donors, and the results of donor programming? (If you can provide specific examples to illustrate your answers it would be very helpful to us.)

Question 6. (If not already captured through responses to previous questions.) Has donor programming created outstanding redundancies or absorption capacity issues? Conversely, has it left important gaps in assistance to CSO? If so, which ones? (If you can provide specific examples to illustrate your answers it would be very helpful to us.)

Question 7. In your opinion, what has been the most positive result or impact of donors' engagement with Jordanian civil society to date? And what has been the most negative one?

Question 8. In your opinion, for civil society programming purposes, which two main lessons can be drawn from the various civil society projects, activities, and organizations that donors have supported thus far?

Question 9. How do you respond to the claim that there is a lack of coordination and division of labor amongst donors, and that joint programming by them is missing?

[Follow-un question: What current coordination mechanisms exist?]

Question 10. How do you respond to civil society's claim that donors' priorities do not reflect local needs?

Question 11. What do you view as the two most significant constraints on civil society's ability to have a larger impact on public policy and public life?

Question 12. What effects to you anticipate decentralization and the new municipalities' law will have on civil society's role in local development and local decision-making?

Question 13. Based on your experience and what you hear, and in light of regional developments, what changes do you expect to affect the civil society component of donors' portfolios in Jordan in the next two-to-five years? How engaged with civil society do you expect donors to be, and which areas, sub-sectors or types of projects are they likely to prioritize?

Question 14. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in Jordan than you were four or five years ago, and why?

Interview Guide for Implementing Partners

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan.

- We are trying to map this sector, but we also are trying to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society as a whole and the nature and extent of its contributions to the kingdom's developmental goals. We would like to pinpoint what stands in the way of making those contributions more significant and how those obstacles might be overcome.
- We also are looking into civil society's engagement with GOJ entities as well as donors' engagement with civil society organizations.
- Finally, we also are trying to get a better sense of how the civil society sector in Jordan is perceived – by the general public, by government officials, by donors, by those in the media who cover civil society, and by civil society activists themselves.

I should underscore that your answers will be kept confidential. The report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. And if you are comfortable with this approach, I am planning to ask you 13 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us?

Questions

Question 1. Overall, what do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of Jordanian civil society today? What do you consider to be its main accomplishments but also the key areas in which it has failed?

[Follow-up, if needed, to refocus respondent: "Main strengths?" "Main weaknesses?" "Primary accomplishments to date?" "Key areas in which civil society has failed?"]

[Follow-up question: Do these strengths and weaknesses differ depending on whether one is looking at CBOs or NGOs, or across governorates and sectors?

Question 2. How would you rate the overall performance of Jordanian civil society to date – strong, weak, adequate, problematic, or in some other way – and why would you rate it that way?

Question 3. Are there challenges to organizational development and activity implementation that disproportionately affect women-led organizations?

[Follow-up question (if answer to question above is yes): What are they and what causes them?]

Question 4. Building on the previous questions, I'd like you to consider five sets of national objectives for Jordan, and I'd be grateful if you could tell me how you would assess the performance of civil society in each area, and why you assess it that way. Those five sets of objectives are:
   a) Addressing social problems such as poverty and unemployment
   b) Improving the population's access to basic services
   c) Political reform
   d) Fighting extremist ideas and violence and promoting tolerance and social cohesion
   e) Helping Jordan cope with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis

[Note: this will need restating each objective and asking for the answer to the question -- as in "So, first, addressing social problems …"]

Question 5. How would you evaluate your own engagement with Jordanian civil society, and which main lessons do you draw from that experience?
(For instance, we would be interested in your views regarding the relative merits of alternative ways of engaging civil society, which approaches are more productive in that regard, and why; if you can provide specific examples to illustrate your answers, that would be very helpful to us.)

Question 6. (If not already captured through responses to previous questions.) Has donor programming created outstanding redundancies or absorption capacity issues? Conversely, has it left important gaps in assistance to CSO? If so, which ones? (If you can provide specific examples to illustrate your answers it would be very helpful to us.)

Question 7. In your opinion, what has been the most positive result or impact of donors' engagement with Jordanian civil society to date? And what has been the most negative one?

Question 8. In your opinion, from a programming perspective, which two main lessons can be drawn from the various civil society projects and entities that donors have supported thus far?

Question 9. Civil society claims that donor agendas do not reflect local needs. How do you respond to that?

Question 10. What do you view as the two most significant constraints on CSOs' ability to have a larger impact on public policy and public life?

Question 11. Based on your experience and what you hear, what changes do you expect to affect the civil society component of donors' portfolios in Jordan in the next two-to-five years? How engaged with civil society do you expect donors to be, and which areas, sub-sectors or types of projects are they likely to prioritize?

Question 12. What effects do you anticipate decentralization and the new municipalities' law will have on civil society's role in local development and local decision-making?

Question 13. Overall, do you think Jordanian civil society is going in the right direction, or the wrong direction? What makes you think this way?

Interview Guide for FGDs
To gauge public perceptions of civil society

Moderator's Introduction

Thank you very much for making time to meet with us and answer our questions today.
Before we start, I would like to explain briefly the purpose of our meeting. As you may know, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting a wide range of projects and activities carried out by civil society organizations in Jordan. It is also providing those

civil society organizations with technical assistance to help them become more effective in planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring their activities.

As part of its own planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan. The purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations is effective and maximizes the benefits to the Jordanian population at large. So, what we are trying to evaluate are the strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and shortcomings of Jordanian civil society, and how civil society organizations might be able to increase their contributions to key developmental objectives for the kingdom.

By meeting with you today, our primary goal is to try to make sure that public perceptions of these issues are reflected in our study, so that they can be taken into account when USAID designs its assistance projects to Jordanian civil society organizations. We also hope that the study's main findings can be conveyed to Jordanian civil society organizations so that these organizations can become more aware of public perceptions of them as they carry out their missions.

Of course, your answers will be kept confidential; the report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual or group of respondents. All we are trying to do is merely capture a variety of opinions and perspectives on Jordanian civil society. We then will review everything we have heard, and will summarize it in a brief report that will be given to USAID. USAID then will use that report to inform and guide the various civil society projects and activities it supports.

Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. We are going to ask you 11 questions, a few of which may entail brief follow-up questions. Before we proceed, do you have any questions for us? Do you need any clarification about any aspect of this study?

Questions

Question 1. When you hear the expression "civil society," what does it mean to you? In your opinion, what does civil society consist of?

[Follow-up questions:
      a) In your view, what role should civil society play in Jordan?
      b) Does it currently play that role? Why/why not?]

Question 2. When you hear the expression "civil society," which impressions first come to your mind? Do you have a rather favorable or rather unfavorable impression of civil society? Why?

Question 3. There are many civil society organizations in Jordan. Which ones stand out in your mind and why? How did you hear about those organizations, or how did you come to know them?

Question 4. I am going to mention four key developmental objectives for Jordan, and I am going to ask you whether you feel civil society is making meaningful to each of those objectives and, if so, how.

First objective: Addressing social problems, such as poverty and unemployment, and improving the population's access to basic services.

> Question: To what extent do you think civil society is making a meaningful contribution in this area? Can you provide one or two relevant examples?
>
> Follow-up questions (probing by moderator): What stands in the way of civil society's ability to increase its contributions to this first objective, and how could those obstacles be overcome?

Second objective: Contributing to democratization in Jordan by addressing barriers to political reform and by promoting greater citizen involvement in the political process and greater accountability of government officials.

> Question: To what extent do you think civil society is making a meaningful contribution in this area? Why/why not? Can you provide one or two relevant illustrations?
>
> Follow-up questions (probing by moderator): What stands in the way of civil society's ability to increase its contributions in this area, and how could those obstacles be overcome?

Third objective: Helping fight extremism (both extremist ideas and extremist activities) and fostering tolerance and social cohesion.

> Question: To what extent do you think civil society is making a meaningful contribution in this area? Why/why not? Can you provide one or two relevant examples?
>
> Follow-up questions (probing by moderator): What stands in the way of civil society's ability to increase its contributions in this area, and how could those obstacles be overcome?

Fourth objective: Coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis.

> Question: To what extent do you think civil society is making a meaningful contribution in this area? Why/why not? Can you provide one or two relevant examples?
>
> Follow-up questions (probing by moderator): What stands in the way of civil society's ability to increase its contributions in this area, and how could those obstacles be overcome?

Question 5. Overall, do you think that civil society organizations have a meaningful influence on the policies of the GOJ and on public life in the country? Why/why not? Can you give one or two specific examples?

Question 6. How much control do you think the government should have on civil society activities? Why/Why not?

[Follow-up question: Do you think that the level of government control is adequate, insufficient, or excessive? In which respects?]

Question 7. What do you view as the major achievements of Jordanian civil society to date? Can you give one or two specific examples?

Question 8. What do you think are the major shortcomings or weakness of civil society organizations in Jordan today? Can you give one or two specific examples?

Question 9. Which changes would you like to see taking place within Jordanian civil society? How do you think civil society organizations should change, and why?

Question 10. Have you ever volunteered or been involved in any civil society activity? Why/why not? Do you think such participation makes a difference?

Question 11. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in Jordan than you were four or five years ago, and why?

Interview Guide for Senior GOJ Officials

(In Amman and Governors)

Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions. We know you have a very busy schedule, and will try not to take up too much of your time.
Before we start, let me provide some context for this meeting and explain briefly what we would like to discuss with you and why. As you know, USAID is supporting a wide range of projects and activities carried out by civil society organizations in Jordan. It is also providing those civil society organizations with technical assistance to help them become more effective in planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring their activities.

As part of its own planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an assessment of the state of civil society in Jordan. The purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective; that it maximizes the benefits to the Jordanian population at large; and that it takes advantage of potential opportunities for mutually advantageous partnerships between GOJ entities and civil society organizations.

So, what we are trying to evaluate are the strengths and weaknesses of civil society, its accomplishments but also its shortcomings, and how civil society organizations might be able to increase their contributions to key developmental objectives for the kingdom. We also are trying to get a better sense of how civil society in Jordan is perceived – including by the general public and by government officials. We want these perceptions to be accurately reflected in our study, so that they can be taken into account when USAID designs its assistance projects to Jordanian civil society organizations.

Your answers will be kept confidential; the report that will develop out of this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. All we are trying to do is merely capture a variety of opinions and perspectives on Jordanian civil society. We then will review everything we have heard, and we summarize it in a brief report that will be given to USAID. USAID then will use that report to inform and guide the various civil society projects and activities it supports.

Again, we are very grateful for your willingness to help us as we conduct this study. If you are comfortable with this approach, I am planning to ask you 12 questions, a few of which entail follow-up questions. But before we proceed, do you have any questions for us?

Questions

Question 1. What do you believe should be the role of civil society in Jordan, and how close do you think Jordanian civil society actually comes to playing that role?

Question 2. How would you rate the overall performance of Jordan's civil society – strong, weak, adequate, problematic, or in some other way -- and why would you rate it that way?

Question 3. Building on the previous question, I'd like you to consider five sets of national objectives for Jordan, and I'd be grateful if you could tell me how you would assess the performance of civil society in each area, and why you assess it that way. Those five sets of objectives are:
   a) Addressing social problems such as poverty and unemployment
   b) Improving the population's access to basic services.
   c) Political reform
   d) Fighting extremist ideas and violence and promoting tolerance and social cohesion
   e) Helping Jordan cope with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis.

[Note: this will need restating each objective and asking for the answer to the question -- as in "So, first, addressing social problems …"]

Question 4. Overall, what do you view as the main strengths and weaknesses, and the main achievements and limitations, of Jordanian civil society thus far?

Question 5. Are there challenges to organizational development and activity implementation that disproportionately affect women-led organizations?

[Follow-up question (if answer to question above is yes): What are they and what causes them?]

Question 6. How would you rate the quality and frequency of interactions between the GOJ and civil society? And more generally how would you describe the nature of the relationship between the GOJ and civil society: Is it a rather straightforward or complicated relationship? Is it primarily cooperative or tense? And is it what you would like it to be or not? Why? (If you could provide us with some examples to illustrate your answer it would be very helpful to us.)

Question 7. What do you consider to be the best example (or best examples) of successful GOJ engagement with civil society? In your opinion, what made this example (or examples) a success?

Question 8. From where you stand, how would you evaluate the nature of the relationship between the donor community and Jordanian civil society? To what extent and in which respects do you think donors play a helpful or unhelpful role in their interaction with Jordanian civil society? Again, if you could provide us with some examples to illustrate your answer, that would be very helpful to us.

Question 9. Many analysts argue that civil society has little impact, if any, on government policies and decisions. From where you stand, do you think that assessment is generally accurate? Why/why not, and can you provide a few relevant illustrations?

[Follow-up question: What are the main skill gaps from which civil society suffers?]

Question 10. How would you like to see civil society change in the next few years? And what contributions, if any, can donors make to those changes in your view?

Question 11. Do you think that events in the region will affect the relationship of civil society with government and the role that civil society can play in Jordan? How?

Question 12. Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about the future of civil society in Jordan than you were four or five years ago, and why?